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• A5100

• A6000

• A77M2

*Among interchangeable-lens digital cameras equipped with an APS-C image sensor as of 12 February 2014, based on Sony research. Measured using CIPA internal measurement method with E PZ 16-50mm F3.5-5.6 OSS lens mounted, Pre-AF off and viewfinder in use. These features are available in A6000.

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Guest Columns and Exclusive Reviews

Most of you might be aware that starting our 27th year, we began exploring newer things when it came to the content of the magazine. Apart from featuring the usual content like the Profiles, Tips & Tech, Reviews and Readers sections, we wanted to do much more to impart knowledge to the readers. So starting in January 2015, we started a new section with guest columnists on a monthly basis.

Last month, we featured a column by the famous wildlife photographer Sudhir Shivaram who spoke about turning a hobby into a profession, highlighting his experience. This month we have award-winning photojournalist Arko Datta who speaks about his approach towards photojournalism and the subject. As a magazine we will be bringing some really interesting guest columnists in the coming months as well, who will share their experience with the readers in order to give them a glimpse of their thought process and creative stream.

In this month's issue we also have the Exclusive Review of the Sony Alpha 7 Mark II, which we have focussed on in great detail. The article focuses on the overall performance of the camera under a variety of conditions and we have played around with the camera for more than a month before dishing this review out. So make sure you catch that in our reviews section. We have also reviewed the new Nikon D5500, which is the first Nikon DSLR with a touchscreen LCD monitor.

I'm also pleased to inform that in the month of April 2015, we will be announcing something really big for the rest of the year. It is not only going to be exciting, but also extremely interesting for the industry as a whole. So put your seat belts on and await the April 2015 issue as well.

We hope that you will like the content that we have put together in this issue, as it sports a new and different flavour.

So Until Next Time....
Happy Reading!!!

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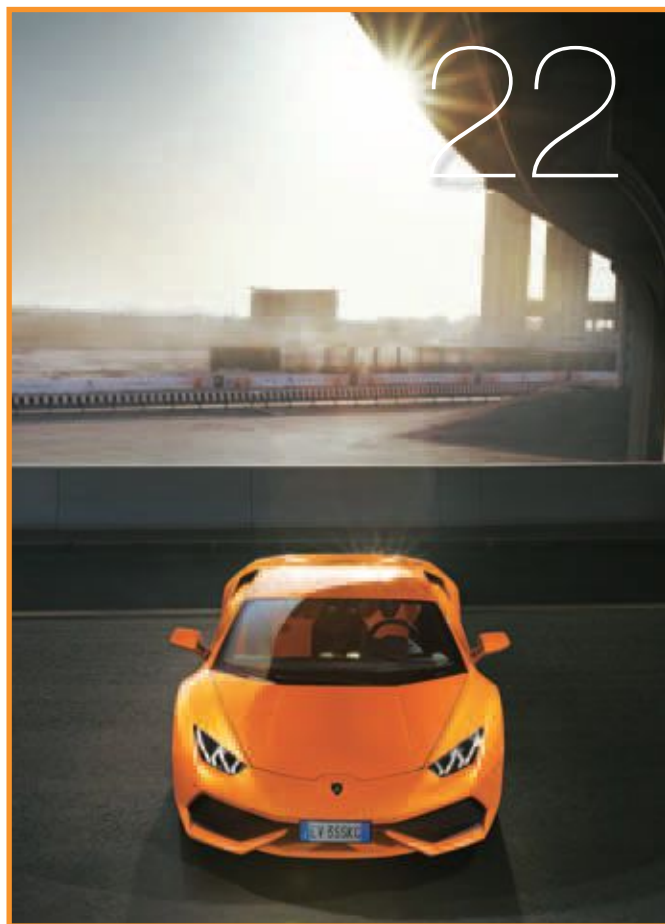
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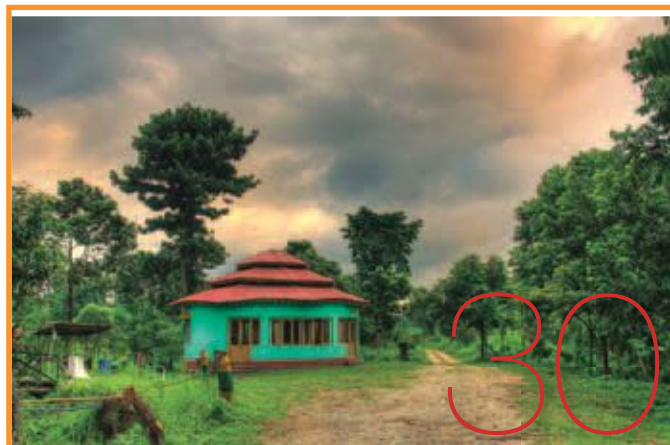
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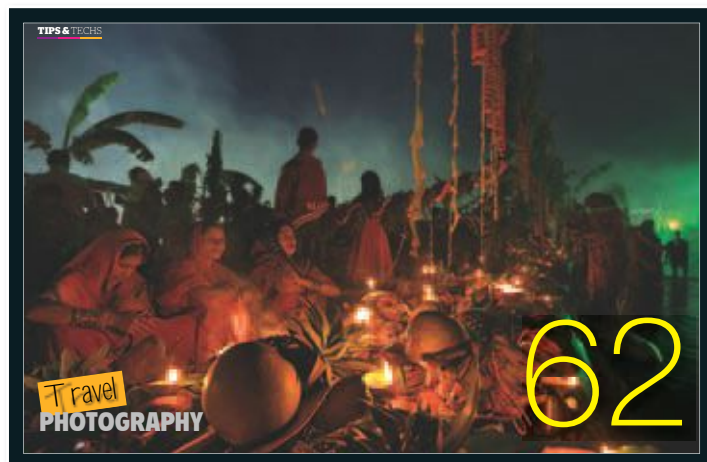
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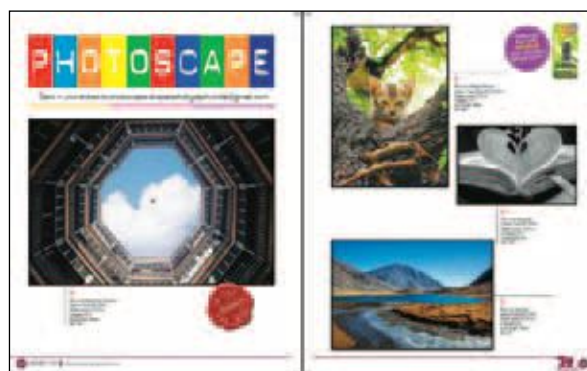
Dear Sir,

I am an amateur photographer from Karaikal and I own a Nikon 5100 DSLR. I have been clicking for last four years and all this time I was a regular reader of *Asian Photography* magazine. Many a time I have sent my entries to get featured in Photoscape section but disappointment was the result. Now I have lost my faith. Now slowly I have stopped believing that you are encouraging budding photographers. Yet, this time too I have sent my images, but without any hope.

Sreenath
Karaikal, Puducherry

Dear Sreenath,

Thanks for your mail. Firstly, it is very disheartening to see that you have almost lost faith in us. But there is a reason why I chose this as one of the letters from the hundreds that we get every month. I wanted to take them through the process of how the images are selected.



Ideally, we receive more than 300-400 images by email every month for the readers section. Unfortunately, at a time only 5-6 images get used in the magazine so we have to bank the others in order to be fair to them and their effort, especially the good ones. So in most cases the images run back as old as 4-5 months. So kindly don't be disheartened about this and keep sending your entries. Very soon we will also be introducing similar sections online for the readers.

Dear Sir,

Firstly, I would like to congratulate you on completing 27 years in the industry. I would also like to inform you that I have been a reader of the magazine since the past five years and have really seen a big change in the manner in which it has shaped and developed. I read the January 2015 issue and was really very pleased to learn about the 'History and Milestones' article of the magazine.



I have read a lot of blogs and magazines from the industry but I don't think anyone has managed to document their journey and milestones as well as you have done. More importantly it gave readers like me an idea of the things that you have done in the past and also the impact that it has had on the industry. There's so much of heritage in those years and that has come out very well in the article. It was really interesting to read.

The whole issue was a treat to read and I am hoping that you have many more to come. Wish you the best for the coming years.

Regards,
Avik Dal, Kolkata

Feedback

Readers' Comments and Suggestions...



Dear Avik,

Thanks for your mail and that is personally one of the best articles that I have done in a long time. Not because others are any less important, but because it involved so much of extensive research that it took me about 20 days to just go through our archives to understand the content and its changes.

But the satisfaction was the article that came out of that, and I am happy that people have appreciated it and liked it as well. Our team has been good and efficient in delivering great content every month and I am happy for that.

Dear Editor,

I have been reading the e-version of the magazine since two years and like it a lot. Actually I am a creative copywriter based out of Mumbai and chanced upon the magazine when I started following your FB page during Artistique. Since I avoid wasting paper I subscribed to the e-version and also follow your online website regularly.

So my question was infact about the website. I visit your website once or twice in a month and see that the content is updated and also fresh as opposed to the magazine. Which is refreshing, but I had a question about the videos section, which doesn't seem to be updated on a regular basis. So I wanted to find out if the magazine was doing anything in that respect?

Regards,

Monang Barot, Mumbai

Dear Monang,

Thanks for your mail, and yes I will be the first to admit that we haven't been very regular at doing our videos. But that was because we were busy working on some simultaneous projects, which caused these delays. However, we are about to change all this effective immediately. So you will see a lot more videos coming up shortly.



Nikon announces new image-browsing software, ViewNX-i

Nikon India has announced the launch of The ViewNX-i, a new image-browsing software designed to enable management of still images and movies recorded with a Nikon digital camera. The software will be available for free download from the beginning of March 17.

ViewNX-i is the successor application to the ViewNX 2 image-browsing and editing software Nikon has offered to date. Inheriting the user-friendly interface of ViewNX 2, the new software, according to Nikon, offers simpler operation as an application specialised for image browsing, with features such as tabs that make it easy to switch between workspaces, and the addition of an Output Toolbar that intuitively



displays convenient functions.

The ViewNX-i is also fully compatible with other Nikon software applications, in which the ViewNX-i serves as the launch pad for RAW development and still-image adjustment using Capture NX-D, and movie editing using ViewNX-Movie Editor. With Capture NX-D, all advanced adjustment

functions available with the application can be used to develop RAW images and edit still images via ViewNX-i. According to Nikon the ViewNX-Movie Editor, is movie-editing software that provides users of all proficiency levels in movie-editing with the ability to easily convert, create and edit movies. This software also allows users to upload movie files directly to social media websites like Facebook and YouTube.

The enhanced mutual collaboration between these applications is said to greatly expand the ways in which users can enjoy their photos and movies after they are recorded.

The software is available for download at <http://nikonimglib.com/hvnx/i>.

Canon introduces two new entry-level DSLR cameras



Canon introduces two new entry-level DSLR camera and expands the IXUS and PowerShot range in addition to launching the super compact EF-M22mm f/2 STM Lens.

Canon has launched two new DSLRs EOS 760D and EOS 750D, equipped with advanced features catered to amateur photographers. Canon is also expanding the PowerShot and IXUS range in addition to introducing the most compact lens in the EF-M range, the pancake EF-M22mm f/2 STM, in silver.

Canon EOS 760D and EOS 750D

Both entry-level cameras, EOS 760D and EOS 750D feature a 24.2 megapixel CMOS sensor, paired with the latest Canon DIGIC 6 image processor. The ISO speed of these two cameras ranges from 100 to 12,800 (expandable to 25,600). The EOS

760D and EOS 750D operate on a new 19-point all cross type system. Both cameras are equipped with Wi-Fi and NFC function. The new CameraConnect app allows users to control the EOS 760D and EOS 750D remotely and upload content onto social media via their smart devices.

A key difference between the two cameras is that the EOS 760D is the first entry-level EOS camera to incorporate a top LCD panel in addition to the main display. Similar to higher-end DSLR cameras, operating the menus and settings in the EOS 760D is achieved through a Quick Control Dial and Main Electronic Dial. Conversely, the EOS 750D features a navigation button control scheme.

POWERSHOT SX410 HS & IXUS 275 HS

The 20.0-megapixel POWERSHOT

SX410 HS features a 40x long zoom (and 80x zoom using ZoomPlus technology) and Canon DIGIC 4+ image processor, whereas the IXUS 275 HS is a high performance 20.2-megapixel camera equipped with 12x optical zoom (and 24x zoom using ZoomPlus technology), a DIGIC 4+ image processor and Full HD movie recording capability in the lifestyle IXUS range.

EF-M22mm f/2 STM Silver

Canon has introduced a compact lens in the EF-M range, the pancake EF-M22mm f/2 STM Silver. The lens is now available in silver, and incorporates a wide aperture that achieves a bokeh effect. With its wide focal length of 22mm, it aimed at natural, landscape, and street photography.

Products will be available in stores during the second quarter of 2015 and the prices will be announced in due course.

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Canon launches Maxify series of network business inkjet printers



Canon India recently introduced the new Maxify range of business inkjet printers, which offers colour network-printing solutions to SOHO customers. These printers are designed with enhanced features including high speed printing, low cost per print, cloud printing capabilities and wireless connectivity to smart devices. Maxify printers are said to be compatible with the optional XL Cartridges which would offer a yield of approximately 2500 pages black and 1500 pages colour prints. Canon has also introduced a new Dual Resistant High Density (DRHD) pigment inks which according to the company would demonstrate high water and marker resistance. Apart from this an app called Maxify Printing Solutions (MPS) has also been introduced which allows printing of PDF, images and other office formats. Canon also informed that the integrated Maxify Cloud Link service adds on cloud access functionality by allowing printing from and scanning to cloud storage providers such as Google Drive, OneDrive, Dropbox, and Evernote. With the Maxify Printing Solutions application, users are provided direct access to the cloud through Maxify Cloud Link from compatible mobile devices and tablets. This app is compatible with iOS and Android OS systems. The printers are aimed for SOHOs consumers from across sectors like healthcare, education, hospitality and other service industries. According to the company these printers will give SOHOs a competitive edge by offering greater print speeds, versatile connectivity, high paper capacity and high page yield and in turn help them increase productivity, save time and money.

Limca Book of Records 2015 recognises Konica Minolta



Limca Book of Records recognised and certified Konica Minolta for the largest media display created on glass facade ever. This was done on Dhaula Kuan Metro station in New Delhi. Konica Minolta marked its culmination of marketing campaign by gaining entry to the *Limca Book of Records* for the largest display on the glass facade. The display was installed by JC Decaux Advertising India on April 15, 2014 which measures 100.58m (330ft) wide and 12.8m (42ft) high. Similar to the *Guinness Book of World Records*, the *Limca Book of Records* emphasises the achievements of Indians at home and abroad.

Mr. V. Balakrishnan, Executive General Manager, Konica Minolta India said, "To be recognised by the *Limca Book of Records* is an honour. We at Konica Minolta believe in doing things differently and we strive to create new value for our users."

Nikon India announces D-SLR D810A for Astrophotographers

Nikon India has introduced the Nikon D810A, a D-SLR built specifically for the astrophotography.

The manufacturer informed that the chief among the D810A's strength is its ability to capture astronomical subjects that emit the H-alpha wavelengths of light such as nebulae and other distant galaxies in red, allowing astrophotographers to see them just as imagined. The 36.3 megapixels camera has features such as longer exposures in low-light conditions with minimal noise, and a live view preview function.

On the announcement, Mr. Hiroshi Takashina, Managing Director, Nikon India said, "Nikon is always up for a challenge and empowering astrophotographers with a dedicated camera of unprecedented image

quality was one intriguing task. We are thrilled to announce the launch of Nikon D810A, a class-leading, high-definition D-SLR that will bring astrophotographers one step closer to capturing the majestic vastness and beauty of space while offering them a new perspective in stunning detail."

"The Nikon D810A has been designed keeping in mind the obstacles that astrophotographers face; it is a result of an amalgamation of advanced imaging technology and suite of outstanding features. Nikon D810A is a 36.3 megapixels camera crafted with unique ability to capture subjects with H-alpha wavelengths, ensuring rich vibrant capture for images of the cosmos that are true to the eye," said Mr. Sajjan Kumar, Vice President – Imaging Division, Nikon India.



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Nikon reveals new DX-format camera : Nikon D7200

Nikon has introduced the new D7200, its latest DX body D-SLR camera which, according to Nikon, offers an enhanced sensor and also wireless capabilities.

The newly introduced D7200 is packed with an EXPEED 4 image processing engine and 24.2 Megapixels. It has an ISO range of 100 to 25600, while retaining the image quality at lower ISOs but having faster processing speed. According to Nikon, the camera also has a larger buffer and can store up to 18 RAW or 100 large JPEG images in continuous shooting mode. The capacity is quite handy as it allows the camera to capture 6fps in continuous shooting and 7fps in 1.3x crop mode. According to Nikon, the CMOS sensor does not have an optical low-pass filter allowing photographers much sharper images. It also is packed with a 'pro-caliber'



51 point autofocus system covering up most of the DX-format area. The system features 15 cross type sensors that work well in low light situations.

The most attractive feature though is its video that supports 1080/60p in 1.3x format and 1080/30p in normal video recording. The

camera also boasts of its time-lapse mode that features its own exposure adjustment and can constantly adjust exposure for smooth transition in changing light scenarios.

The camera has also added several features for budding movie makers like auto ISO in video and wind noise reduction for the built-in stereo microphone. The camera has a 3.2 inch display and an OLED overlay on the viewfinder. The camera features the same magnesium alloy body that the D7100 uses and is dustproof and weather shielded. Other features include built-in Wi-Fi and NFC support for photojournalists or whoever needs a quick and easy file transfer. It can also share files online wirelessly.

Nikon has not provided any details on the pricing of the product in India, but the Nikon D7200 with a 18-140 VR kit lens is going on sale in April 2015.

Honor to launch Honor 6 plus by end of March

Honor has shared ambitious plans for the Indian market at the sidelines of the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona. The company also displayed some of its products at the congress for the media to firsthand experience, which includes the soon to be launched Honor 6 plus. Honor would be officially launching the honor 6 plus in India in late March along with other products. The Honor 6 plus will be the first ever smartphone in Indian market with bionic parallel dual lens.

The company informed that its products were launched in October 2014 with Flipkart.com in India and since its launch the success of Honor products like Honor 3C and Honor 6 has reinforced the company's commitment. The focus will be on emerging markets with India as a priority market for Honor. The company has already launched across 57 global markets only in six months.

Addressing the Indian media delegate at the MWC, Mr. Dragon Yin - President of Honor International Business said, "Honor was launched last year in Western Europe and the success in

these markets has made us optimistic. We have already entered 57 global markets only in 6 months and plan to invest considerably to develop global markets and India as these are very important market for us."

In 2014 Honor clocked 20 million units which were approximately 1.5 units sold every second of sales. The brand targets the youth, the digital natives and people who seek technology. The company is also looking to launch a slew of 4G products in addition to the honor 6 plus.

Talking about their plans for the India market Mr. Yin added, "With the launch of 4G in India, we are sure that we will be able to increase our market share by introducing affordable 4G smart phones in India. Our differential lies in our quality, our ability to innovate and each of our products is a result of extensive research and development. We are expecting that the Honor6 plus to take the market by storm." The company also introduced the new CEO of Honor, Mr. Zhao Ming at the event. Prior to his appointment as the CEO of Honor, Zhao Ming was the Vice President of Huawei's Western Europe Region.



AskYourExpert

Send in your Questions to
askyourexpert@asianphotographyindia.com



Answered by
Bhavya Desai
Editor, Asian Photography

In wildlife photography, is it better to use 500mm telephoto lens or should I use adapter and converters? What is the difference in the results? I am using Canon EOS 1200D.

Rohit Singh
Rajasthan

Dear Rohit,

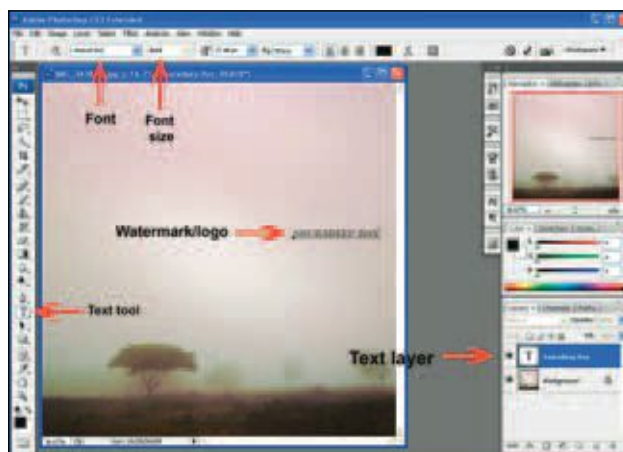
This is a common thing to do when you don't want to break the bank and get effective results from your camera and focal length. So my suggestion is that if you don't have the capacity currently to afford a 500mm lens, then it would be a good idea to use an adapter and converters. Especially, since you would like to use it for wildlife photography.

How to make a photography logo in a photograph? I have tried it with Photoshop, and it did not work, as the resolution of my logo is not increasing. So please help me and tell me how to make a logo.

Prashant Patel
Bhopal

Dear Prashant,

There are a few different ways to create your logo. The simplest one that most photographers use is to write it on the photograph itself using a specific font. You can select the word tool in Photoshop from the toolbar on the left side of your screen. Then click on the photograph at the place you want your logo to be and write your logo content on it. You can also select the font size from the top tool bar. To manipulate the size of your logo, all you have to do is click on the word layer at the right side of your screen and go to edit>transform (ctrl+t). Then drag the edges to increase or decrease the size of the logo and press enter when you are happy with the size. If you want



to drag the logo and reposition it, you can click on the layer once, then press and hold control and drag the logo around. You should make sure that your logo is subtle. You can reduce the opacity, so that the logo does not overpower the image, and distract the viewer from the subject.

I want to do a diploma in photojournalism, please suggest me a right photography institute or college which is affiliated by UGC or a reputed university.

Nikhil Vishwakaram
Jabalpur

Dear Nikhil,

Unfortunately, we are not aware currently if there are any schools that have an affiliation by UGC or reputed university. The schools that are affiliated with these are usually your B schools which provide photographic course as part of the bigger curriculum.



Ideally the photographic institutes that offer these courses aren't affiliated in this respect, as far as my knowledge goes. But I could be wrong as well. Some of the popular and good schools in the country are Light and Life Academy, Udaan School of Photography, Shari Academy, National Institute of Photography. All of these are good schools and have a good program.

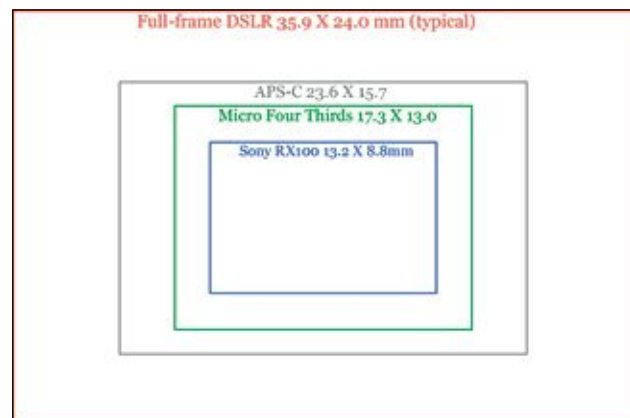
What is exact difference between photo quality of APS-C and full-frame cameras? Why we should or should not use full-frame cameras?

Milind Gavkar, Palghar

Dear Milind,

It's a good question and a basic one that you have asked. However, the answer to your question is fairly lengthy, which means that I cannot take everything up here. But to answer the first part of your question regarding the image quality, usually the thumb rule is that the bigger the sensor the more light and details it allows to capture in the frame and which is the reason why Full-Frame cameras ideally provide better results. But this also depends on a variety of other factors. This is the basic answer regarding the quality of the output between the two sensors.

So as per my understanding the quality yielded



from a full-frame might be better than an APS-C camera. But what a cropped sensor also does is that it improves the focal length of the lens which further improves the quality of the image. So ideally it is a debatable topic depending on the genre or the type of photography that you are into. Since the quality of the image might differ depending on what you shoot.

I will take up this in the next month, as this is a lengthy answer.

I am a 14-year old girl with a lot of dreams in photography. I was gifted a camera Sony Cyber-shot DSC-H300 for my last birthday. As I stay in a hostel, I really get too rare opportunities for a nice click. How can I pass my free times with my camera more effectively and creatively?

Cuckoo Arion Shadiya

Kerala

Dear Shadiya,

The camera is considered as the photographer's eyes. And if you are looking to spend time more effectively then there are a number of things that you can do. My suggestion would be to take up tasks that not only allow you to improve your knowledge about photography but get you more acquainted with the features of the cameras.



So something that I always suggest newcomers is to take up the Project 365. Ideally, it's a project where you shoot one image everyday and document it. The idea is to shoot a different type and style of image everyday which allows you to explore creativity as well as learn new genres. The reason why this is a good idea is because over a period of time you will exhaust the ideas that pop up and that will challenge you to explore new features, style and creativity.

I have a Canon 100D with 18-55mm kit lens. As per the specification, the aperture is F 4-5.6. Sometimes I can set the aperture to F 4, but I am not able to set the aperture to F 4 in Av mode. It seems I am making some mistake. Can you please let me the reason for this?

Sandeep

New Delhi

Dear Sandeep,

A kit lens has a variable aperture and it depends on the focal length as well. As you increase the focal length the f-number will increase. At the 18mm end you can still get an aperture of f-4. This happens since the f-stop is determined by dividing the focal length of the lens with the width of the aperture. Thus, if you increase the focal length the f-number increases. However, with technology improving every day, there are lenses with constant apertures available in the market now.

I am a wedding photographer and I want to buy a DSLR. Can you suggest me if the Sony A77 Mark II is better than the Canon 7D Mark II?

Prakash Sakunde
Satara

Dear Prakash,

As I always say that it is important as a photographer for you to know that is the best for you, since it is important for you to be comfortable with a particular brand. Having said that, in this case, you are asking me to recommend cameras that belong in two completely different segments. This means that they can't be compared at all in my eyes. It is like comparing apples and oranges in this case.



Is there any fixed age for doing photography course? And is it possible for a psychologist to handle photography course at the same time or opt for photography as also a career option at the same time?

Shweta
Visakhapatnam

Dear Shweta,

In short the answer to all your questions is YES!

Well learning or taking a course in photography is like any other field. There is not time to start and no time to end. So you can take up a course in photography at any age. And as for your question regarding being able to make time to do both, it is possible. There are a number of schools that provide you with flexible options like weekends, for people that have an alternate profession and want to pursue this as a hobby.

But if you want to have a career out of it then it depends upon how you are able to manage your time effectively. So if you can do that then you can have a career in both as well. I don't see any reason why it is not possible.

Presently I'm a second year B.Tech student and I am very much interested in photography. Are there any online courses which provide me the basics of photography? Also, can you just tell me the best idea to focus a picture perfectly?

Chandu
Tamil Nadu

Dear Chandu,

Yes there are options to do online courses to pursue your hobby. Although I am not sure if there is any that an India photographic institute offers. But if you are planning to do it online then geographic location is not something that should bother you at all. So even if it is something that is from another country then might as well do it. Just ensure that you have some certification of the course that you have done.

Unfortunately, I am not aware of any websites, or I would've recommended something.



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Photojournalism

MUCH MORE THAN JUST WIELDING A CAMERA

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

As part of the continuation from last month's special section, we continue to bring the latest content in the magazine.

All throughout 2015 we will be featuring a renowned guest columnist in each issue who will share their experience and tips with the readers.

I feel privileged to live the life of a photojournalist. I not only get to witness history being made from the front seat, but record it, and in a sense influence it as well.

The world of photojournalism has always been magical to me and I associate a sense of idealism with it. I never did it for the money. Yes, I did need to earn my bread but that was not my motivation to pick up the camera. And it cannot be, when you start as an eight-year-old! It was not about designations, salaries, recognition or awards. I was in it for the sheer joy of recording moments and capturing the world around me. And like many photojournalists, I grew up to loving the genre of street of photography that eventually lead to photojournalism.

Over the years, I managed to make my way through without having to compromise on my ideals and pride of being a photojournalist. But I started photography in the golden and glorious days of photojournalism. There was a mystique and sense of awe associated with it. It was revered.

As I journeyed through the rough and tumble that comes with being a photojournalist, the profession itself was also morphing, changing the art and craft of contemporary photojournalism. Perhaps it is one of the professions that has changed immensely over the years, especially due to the change in technology and affordability of the hardware.

Till about the 90s, the SLR was a gadget hanging from a shoulder of only a professional or a very serious



amateur. As a hobby it was expensive. All that changed with the advent of the digital age. Photography has become more democratic now with almost every other person owning a DSLR! It is not rare to see people walk around with their cameras slung around their neck or still others holding up their mobile phone camera to shoot something that interests them. These changes have been good for the hobbyist, but not so much for those wanting to take it up as a profession, be it photojournalism or commercial photography.

Not just digital photography,

but photo editing software like Photoshop, photo stock companies, photo sharing platforms like Flickr, Facebook and so many more that are sources of free pictures for end users, hasn't quite helped the cause of professional photography.

The mystical darkroom has been replaced by the USB ports and Photoshop and media organisations are always on the look-out for free images from amateurs instead of sourcing it from professionals. Millions of images are being shot every second, and most of them are being made available for free.

Irrespective of one's ability, one can't be a doctor, or an accountant or a lawyer, a pilot, an architect, or even a driver without having the necessary degree or licence. But everyone can become a professional photographer and start earning money, since there is no entry barrier, like most other professions have.

There was a time when photography was looked upon as just a hobby, then it became a serious profession and now it is again in the danger of being relegated to being just a hobby. The present environment is indeed challenging.





But professional photography, especially photojournalism has always faced challenges. With the advent of broadcast journalism there was a feeling that photojournalism wouldn't survive. But photojournalists adapted, storytelling changed and photojournalism not only survived, it thrived.

Photojournalists showed that many a moment can be better captured memorably as a 1ff (1 frame forever) rather than 24 fps.

But now with the advent of citizen photojournalists and affordable digital photography, it's again been said that photojournalism won't survive, that hard news coverage is almost dead.

In fact, a few months ago there was a fire at the famous VT (now called CST) train station in Mumbai, and more than the fire, I was amazed by the number of people standing there and photographing it. Almost every one of the hundreds of onlookers seemed to have donned

the role of a photojournalist. So by the time a professional landed up at the location, the local people had already shot many dramatic moments. Another good case in point was the recent mauling of a man by a tiger at Delhi zoo. Television and newspapers showed video footages and photos shot by onlookers.

But when a similar incident happened on 1st January 1996, none of the teeming New Year revellers at the zoo had any pictures. Good quality cameras were few and far among the amateurs and the dramatic hard news pictures were largely being shot only by the professionals.

The emergence of amateurs doesn't end there. Good documentary work is also being done by people who are not looking at photography as a source of income and are professionals in other fields.

Besides, while photography is enjoyable as a hobby, earning money from it is becoming increasingly difficult, with millions of images being available for free.

As more people take up photography, there are many others also





giving up professional photography with alarming frequency. Talented youngsters are not able to sustain themselves.

Where is it going wrong? Is it the end for professional photography?

Of course not!

While there are hundreds of thousands of people flaunting a DSLR, it takes a lot more to be a professional photojournalist.

Unfortunately, many youngsters take up photojournalism for all the wrong reasons. Most take it up because they like travelling or think it is a relaxed creative process and there are still others who are attracted to the superficial glamour associated with it.

If you like to travel, then save money from your present job and travel on vacation. Don't become a photojournalist for that. During my first four visits (on professional assignments) to Goa, I didn't get to see the sea. I transited through Jordan with no tours to the Dead Sea! I used to fly in and out on assignments without time for sightseeing. The

main motivation of a photojournalist should be to tell a relevant story, not to travel. Photojournalists do travel a lot, but that is the nature of the beast, it is part of the job. We just follow a story. Be it 10,000kms away or in your neighbourhood. I'd rather do a great story a kilometre away from my home than an ordinary one in Alaska.

A photojournalist is story driven – go wherever the story is. And if you like to take some natural light portraits on a street while taking a leisurely stroll on a Sunday, don't mistake that with photojournalism. It is just a very small part of it. Travel and trying to create art is secondary; Photojournalism envelopes much more. Credibility, consistency and creativity, backed by hard work, an understanding of the story, courage and a single minded obsession – that's what sets a photojournalist apart from the rest of the camera-wielding crowd.

While every colourful festival sees hundreds of amateurs pulling out their cameras, it's the tougher situations that set apart the professionals from

amateurs. The 26/11 attack on Mumbai's hotels, hospital and railway station took place in crowded public places. But there are absolutely no images from the general public and understandably so, since life is more precious than images. Just two or three professional photojournalists managed to take pictures of the terrorist Kasab, despite the attack taking place in full public view.

Beyond any creativity or rational thinking, it takes courage, quick thinking, single minded obsession and the sturdy heart of a professional photographer to get the image of the gunmen. And that is not the stuff of the amateurs.

While most jobs are like an arranged marriage, - well thought of and planned to the last detail, photojournalism is a passionate love affair, where words like security and rationality are meaningless.

After all, it's this bunch of photographers who are willing to put their own lives on line to capture historic moments, and I am proud to belong to that clan.

CAPTURING **SPEED** *DEMONS*

Hailing from Kerala, this young photographer was once studying animation and drawing cars and bikes, looking at automotive magazines as a hobby. However, the revving of the automobiles couldn't keep him behind a desk anymore. His passion for automobiles, with a natural eye for photography, was combined, and he was soon capturing those same zooming supercars and bikes with his lens for an automotive magazine. Having now worked with multiple magazines across Middle East, he is quickly becoming known for his work in the speed racing world. This month, we speak to **Arun M. Nair**, and find out how he shifts his camera gears to match the fast faced cars.





Three years ago, during one of his college lectures, Arun came to realise that the idea of sitting behind the desk 24/7 will never make him happy. But, even in his wildest dreams, he had then never pictured himself being a photographer. One of his friends used to have a DSLR, Sony Alpha 200, which was the very first DSLR he started shooting pictures with. Before that he used to shoot pictures with a mobile phone camera and a 2MP digicam gifted by his father. Learning the very basics of photography wasn't that hard for him as he had a background in art/animation. About his decision to venture into photography, he said, "The inevitable stage of a person's life is that precise moment when you know you have to

take care of your responsibilities and if you are from a middle class struggling family, it means the decisions we make affect the lives of our dear and near ones too. So at the age of 21, I started looking for a job."

He soon managed to convince his father that he wanted to start a career as a photographer, which led Arun to buy his first camera, Canon 60D. "I started roaming around, visiting new people, learning things, expanded my observation skills and how colours basically work. After doing a handful of freelance jobs, I managed to get two super bikes, thanks to a close friend who owns one these bikes." He then decided to merge the two things he loved, automotives and photography, and shot a set of photos

for his friend. These pictures were an instant success and his photos started circulating around the internet.

Due to this immense response, he tried his luck in famous automotive magazines in India. However, he said that the results were rather painful. "Some didn't even respond to the letters and emails, while some replies were filled with copy-pasted emotionless wishes, and some said my style of shooting pictures is not the ones Indian magazines and their audience prefer."

After spending almost a year of rejections, Arun managed to get a ticket to Dubai with the help of his father. "After a lot of failures, I finally got a chance to prove my skills, and at that very moment I became a



professional photographer.”

His very first photography job was for *Wheels Magazine* in Middle East, as a test to get a job there, which he says did not turn out very well. “My lack of faith in my skills and new atmosphere wrecked my confidence. The colours and nature I was familiar with back in my beautiful country were absent here, and I performed very poorly in that shoot too. While it was not a great start, I learned some lessons from this and that cemented my career in many ways. Also, I taught myself to have a ‘Plan B’ for everything.”

Speaking about his inspirations, Arun said that he is inspired by many photographers across the globe and their works, but he did not have a mentor to show him what was right and wrong.

We asked him to describe his style of photography, and he said he could possibly call it cinematic. “To be honest, I don’t know. Sometimes I like over the top ideas; A bit of fantasy, a bit of Hollywood-ish action film framing, sometimes mixture of landscape photography and minimalism. I’ll go for any styles, if my eyes are happy with the whole treatment.”

Describing his process, Arun said that he always ensures that he is prepared in advance for any shoot. “If it’s an editorial shoot I go to the

WEAPONS OF CHOICE



I started my basics on a Sony Alpha 200 DSLR, borrowed from a friend, but soon that had to go back. Later, I borrowed a Nikon D90 from another friend, until I owned my first DSLR - Canon 60D.

When it comes to shooting today, for official purposes, I use Canon 5D Mark III and Profoto AcuteB flash systems. The lenses I use are the 24-70mm 2.8, 70-200mm 2.8 and 85mm Zeiss). I personally own the Sony A7R (with 24-70 Zeiss lens and 55mm Zeiss 1.8mm) along with my old buddy Canon 60D. I recently bought latest ProfotoB1 system, which for my job is the best lighting gear currently available in the market.





location of the shoot with the cars and improvise with given situations. But if it's an advertisement or for a press release, I'll study the car's anatomy, to figure out things like which angle it will look good from, which stance is the most preferred one etc. I also like spending free time for travelling across Middle East to find new locations that would suit for my upcoming projects. Location is one of the most key elements which control the overall mood for automotive shoots."

Automobile photography presents its own set of challenges, and we asked Arun about it and how he tackles them. "So far from my experience, automotive is a fusion of

end, we have more flexibility pixel levels of details in an image and we can alter or rework on them. Good knowledge in physics and art is good when editing photos; some of the photographers I know edit their own pictures where others rely on highly advanced retouching studios. So far, I edit pictures by my own, which give me a basic idea how to compose an image and I have the final product in my mind before shooting too."

Arun said that the one of the most important aspect of automotive photography is to feel the same emotions that the designer who made these cars went through. "Anyone can shoot cars, but those who admire

me a huge headstart in my automotive photography learning process."

Narrating one of his most memorable shoots, he said the first shoot he did was his most memorable one, "My first shoot that I did back in 2012, thanks to my close friends, is one of my closest. I did that project and the response was huge, and it gave me the confidence to explore more in this genre. The next memorable shoot was the one which led to my first permanent job as chief photographer in *Topgear Middle East*. It was a Toyota GT86 and the idea was to show a Point A to Point B travelogue. The pictures went viral and after that they decided to place

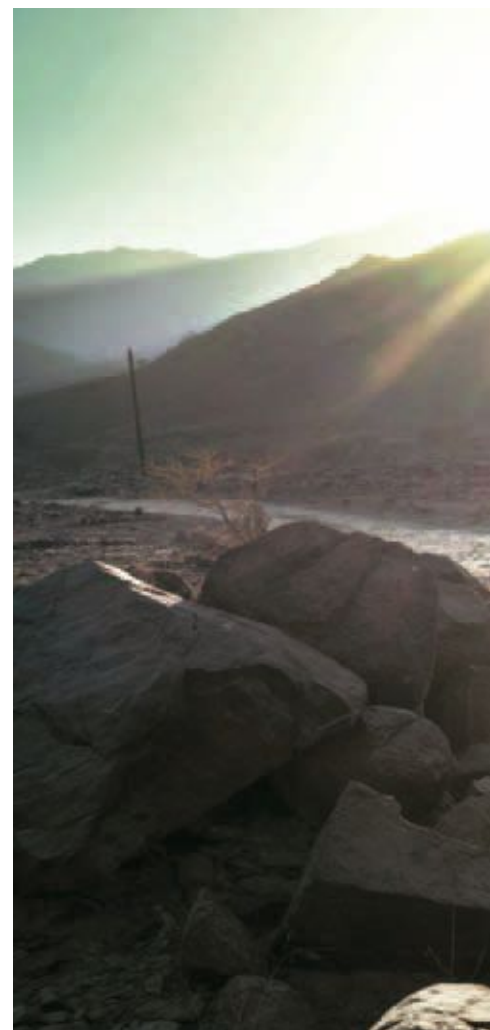


different forms of photography. There is landscape photography, product photography, fashion, motorsports and so on. For the best output, we have to rely on these mentioned types of styles and fuse them together to get clean outputs." He added that automotive isn't just about setting your lights up and clicking. "It needs multiple layers of exposures, polarised layers, layers with lights, so that in the

these machines and respect their history and their potentials can shoot cars much better. The photographer can then predict over-steering of the car, to visualise those emotions of a race driver while he is waiting for the green light. To picture all these emotions you have to be in that position. Ever since I started riding motorcycles, I was fascinated by the stunts and racing scene, which gave

me in Chief photographer position. I was only 21 years old then."

He also said, "Then it was the legendary racer James Hunt's McLaren M26 F1 race car. The sheer amount of adrenaline pumped into my bloodstreams was beyond levels I can even fathom. The reasons for this excitement were that he was, firstly, one of my greatest idols in racing history and secondly, it was the



legendary McLaren M261!"

When asked about how he selects his projects, he said that he does it on one basis, how challenging it is. "I really don't like idea of doing the same thing over and over again. I like to travel to places, shoot in different cultures, locations and climates. These days I am trying indoor studio shoots too, which is more like an exercise for me to learn more complex lighting."

Arun said that he is learning automotive photography. "It took me a good three years to find the tip of this vast form of art and I do need more years to learn, practice and chisel my skills further. However, automotive photography is dying, as some of the big brands choose CGI over photography because the results are quick, flexible and cheaper to produce. Knowing this fact, I have my plans to switch sides to fashion



photography slowly. Right now, I have some projects coming up with fusion of fashion and automotive, plus I'm doing some personal projects with well-known automotive photographers across the globe."

As an advice to aspiring automobile photographers, Arun

said that you must do what you love to do. "I know it's a cliché sentence that everyone gives away as advice, but I came to know what it actually that means some years back. Every job has its own value, world doesn't move forward if it is filled with doctors and engineers. From the invention

of the wheel, humans have relied on transportation. It has played an essential part in shaping our society as the way we see things today. World need photographers to capture these transformations, so the future generations have a brief idea what were our lives were like. Automotive photography is more like a celebration of these amazing engineered art forms which represent speed and power."

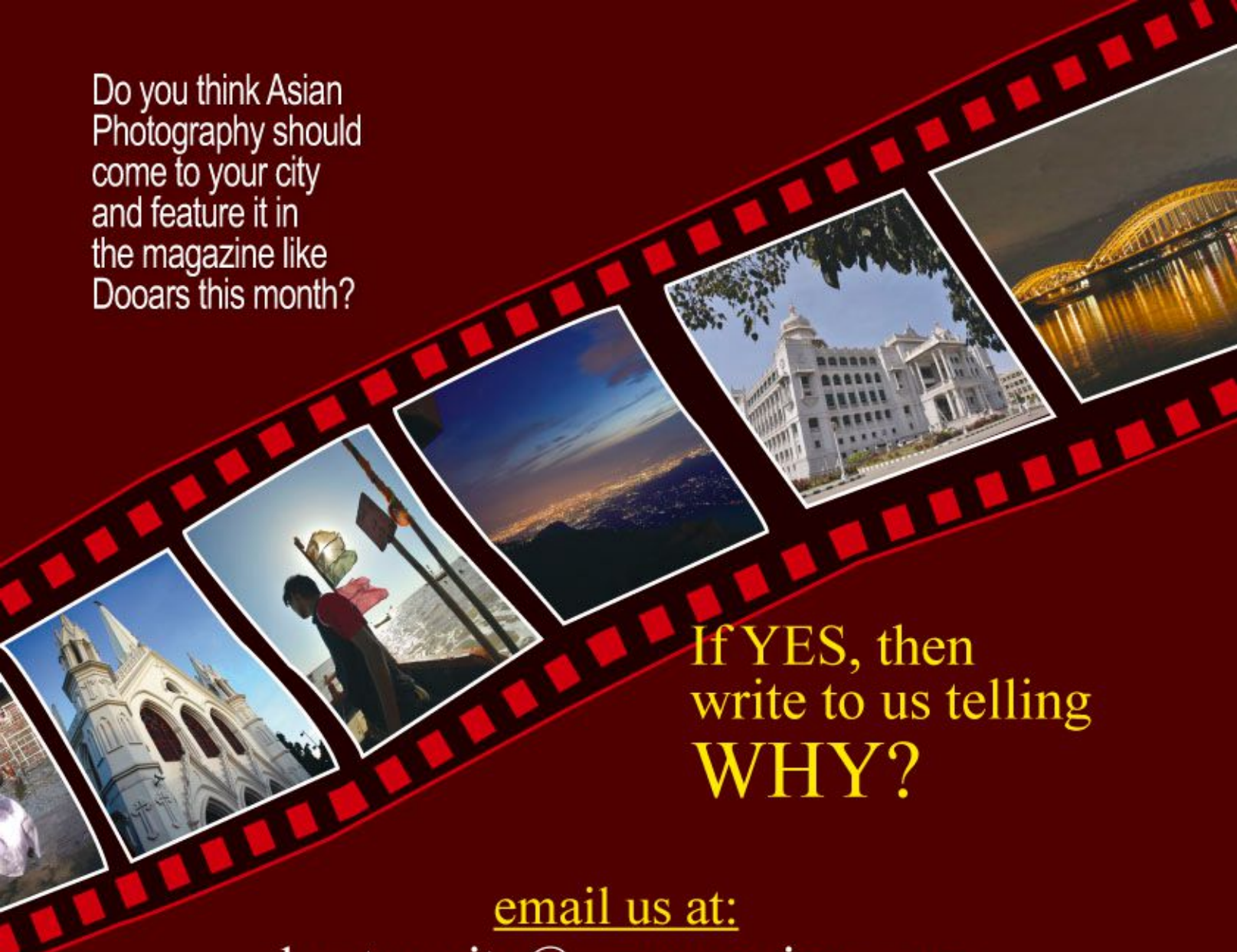
"Also remember, when a number of people try to de-motivate you from the goal you want to achieve, it doesn't mean that you are not doing right. It only means that they don't have the guts to take such leap of faith, and they are simply transferring their fears to you. I would rather prefer to become a failure after taking a risk and working for something, than not take a risk and remain an unnoticed soul who goes with the flow."

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INTO THE DOOARS

-WEST BENGAL



I have travelled several times across the Terai and Dooars and covered multiple places, from the tea gardens and large green forests to way up North in adjacent area of Himalayas to Alipurduar extreme south of this region. But whenever I go there, I stumble upon something new in this land and end up getting lost in its natural beauty.

This region is fondly known as the land of tribal, and it's to the North of West Bengal, with the Eastern Himalayas as a natural backdrop. You will find a vast texture of dense forests teeming with wildlife, unending tea gardens, and babbling rivers, interspersed with sleepy or busy settlements, constitute a fascinating tourist destination.

Derived from the word 'doors' (doors to Bhutan), this region also forms a gateway to the hill stations of North Bengal, Sikkim, Bhutan and the North-Eastern states. The dense natu-

ral forests interwoven with lush green tea gardens are crisscrossed by Teesta, Raidak, Torsha, Jaldhaka, Kaljani and other rivers with innumerable tributaries trotting and rolling down from the hills. The entire region is served with a network of motorable roads running through the deep forests and tea gardens. The Terai and Dooars is bifurcated by River Teesta, which is a beautiful river in North Bengal originating from Sikkim and is known as the lifeline of the state. The entire region is not so big and population including urban area around 3-4 lakhs.

Hailing from Siliguri, I have had extensive opportunity to go there because the region starts 10-12 km across from my city. The trip this time was totally unplanned because some of my photographer friends came from Kolkata and planned a photographic tour for one night and two days. Our main objective was photography, but because of this short vacation we did not have ample opportunity to cover all the places of this region. We focused on the beautiful banks of the river around the Eastern part of the region, and the forest attractions at night.



We wanted to start our exploration from the Western part. So, after my friends arrived at New Jalpaiguri Railway Station, we grabbed a bite, and then directly headed to Gajoldoba. From Siliguri, one can

catch a bus which follows the forest line and Teesta canal heading towards Gajoldoba.

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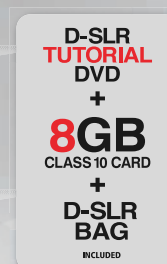
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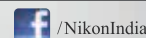
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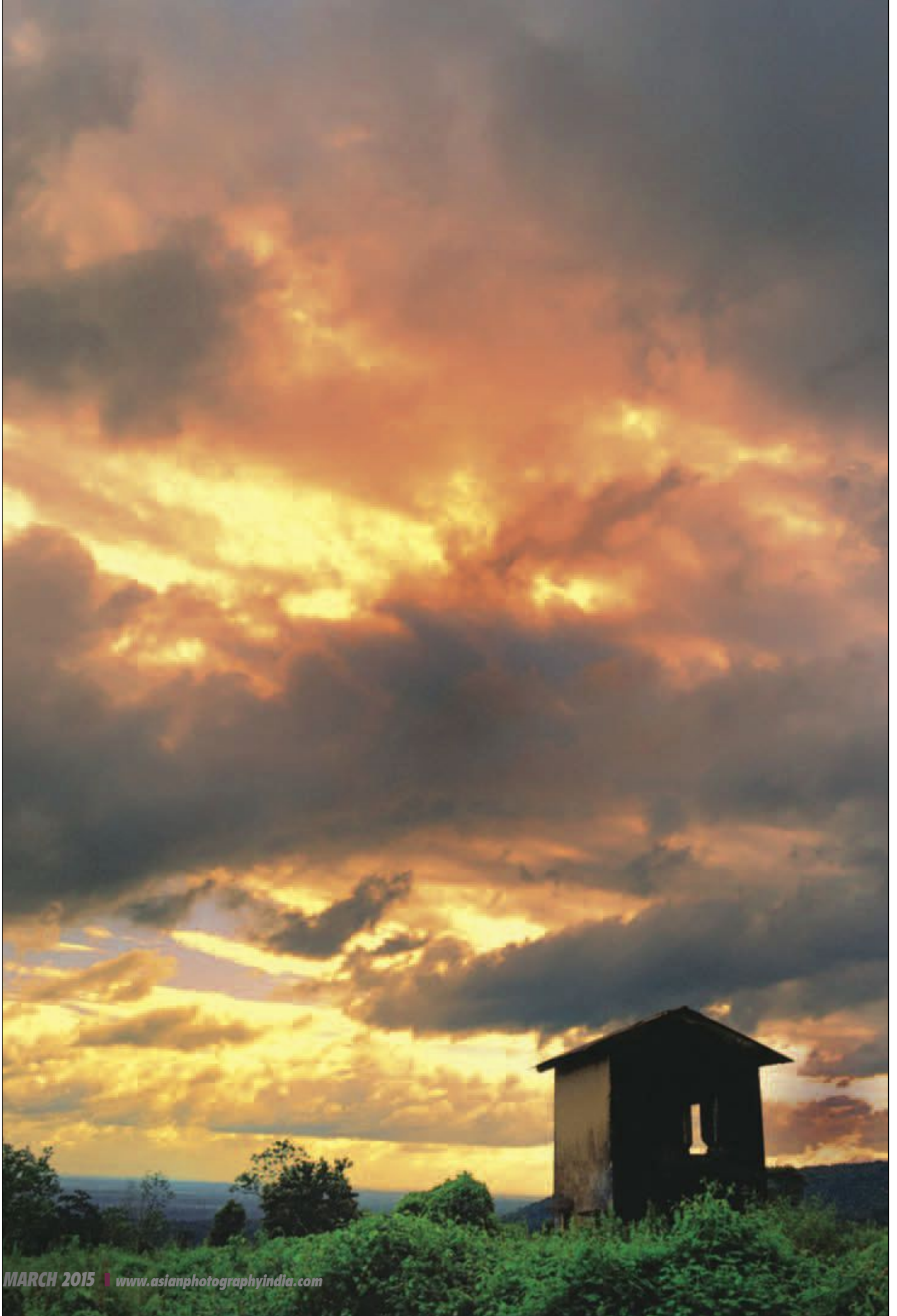


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is surrounded by the Baikunthapur forests, and is an hour's drive from Jalpaiguri. The reservoir is used by many water birds from Ladakh and Central Asia – Little Grebe, Great Crested Grebe, Bar-headed Goose, Greylag Goose, Lesser Whistling Duck, Ruddy Shelduck, Common Shelduck, Cotton Teal, Tufted Duck,

Common Teal, Eurasian Wigeon, Spot-billed Duck, Mallard, Great Cormorant, Indian Cormorant, Little Cormorant, Indian Pond Heron, Grey Heron, Purple Heron, Northern Lapwing, River Lapwing, Grey-headed Lapwing, Little Ringed Plover, etc.

The Dooars overpowers one's

senses, and if you're someone who loves some fun in the green outdoors, it's definitely worth visiting. It offers you the opportunity to shoot birds, landscapes and tribal portraits. Before lunch, we enjoyed the day strolling around and shooting some landscapes and birds. After having lunch in a village hotel at Gajoldoba we proceeded to Lataguri, where we booked a forest bungalow at Neora Forest Camp. The bungalow was fully surrounded by forest, and the cottage was a pretty sight against the backdrop of the Kanchenjunga. A subdued river Neora dissected the forest area. On one side was the dense jungle, while there was habitation on the other bank. Modelled like a tree house, the cottage stood a few yards from the river. A little away from the cottage was the caretaker's room and immediately beside it a





watch tower. We had a really wonderful time staying here and it was quite an adventure. We spotted few wild animals during our stay too.

Early next morning we went to surrounding areas like Chalsa,

Nagrakata, Chapramari and bank of river Murti. The river is quite scene, and we photographed a number of snaps of local fisherman. It's a small village with Murti River floating beside and with the magnanimous Goru-

mara forest standing opposite is the ideal gateway to start and complete your Dooars tour, with wonderful surroundings and over a hundred species of charming birds including the Great Hornbills. Then we passed through the Chapramari forests by road. The wildlife sanctuary is crossed by the railway line between Siliguri and Malbazar. Elephants have been killed by trains in several incidents. Then we reached a small railway station called Oodlabari, a beautiful railway station surrounded by a hill river and some tea gardens. We enjoyed interacting with the people, and learn about their culture and their daily life.

Our tour came to an end, and of course we wished we had more time on our hands, as there was a whole part of the region we hadn't see yet. However, we were happy to experience the region's diverse demography, geographical differences, and also biological and cultural diversity.

TEXT & IMAGES : ARUP BISWAS



Asian Photography & IMAGING

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CREATIVE

Underexposure

Like we discussed creative uses of noise in images in the last issue, this time we are going to look at purposeful underexposure in photography. Underexposure is seen as a 'Don't' in photography, just like excessive noise in pictures. It is seen as a negative thing that one must try to avoid when clicking pictures, and attempt to get perfect exposure. But does correct exposure always do an image justice? Read on to find out. Getting the correct exposure is not difficult, with your camera telling you if it is underexposed, or a handheld light-meter that you might use. However, to underexpose, you will have to deliberately do it on your camera.

IT NEED NOT NECESSARILY BE IN A LOW-LIGHT AREA

To get an underexposed shot, it need not always have to be a dark setting. In fact, it can be quite the opposite. For example you can get beautiful underexposed images in a brightly lit setting. It's a unique way of showing the contrast of the scene, and will also help bring out textures and details in the image.

TELLS A STORY

Having an underexposed or a dark image doesn't always have to be bad. In fact, you can use it to your advantage and add some personality to your images. Dark and underexposed images tell a story, yet add a sense of mystery to an image. It leaves a lot for the viewer to interpret.

COMPOSITION

When you are deliberately shooting an underexposed image, having a sensible composition is quite critical. You cannot expect to point anywhere and drop the exposure a few stops and expect the image to be a piece of art. Think about how you would like to place your subject in your scene, so as to get the most drama. If you are shooting an underexposed image, ensure that your subject is not too much in the shadows, that it is lost completely. Just as if you were shooting an overexposed image, you would make sure that the subject is not washed out with too much light.

WAYS TO DO IT

As you are deliberately shooting an underexposed shot, you will accordingly have to tweak your settings in camera. There are multiple ways to do this, but the basic idea is to have the exposure meter reading to go below the '0' mark. This can be done in different ways. To start with, you can turn the mode dial to manual mode or 'M', so that you have full control of the settings on your camera.



Once you are on manual setting, you can then either choose to increase the aperture,

meaning close the opening, to reduce the amount of light entering the camera, or you



can choose to increase the shutter speed.

However, you have to remember, that if you are increasing the aperture (closing it), you will get larger depth of field.

POST-PROCESSING

If you are not able to get an underexposed shot in your camera, or you want to try playing with some of your older images and underexpose them, you can easily do it in post-processing. All you will need is a photo-editing software like Photoshop or Lightroom.

If you are using Photoshop, you can use the curves adjustment, and pull the curve and adjust it to see how underexposed you want the image to be. If you are using Lightroom, you can simply adjust



PHOTO: Shiv Kumar



the exposure and go half a stop, or even a whole stop below, and see how the image looks.

GO BLACK AND WHITE

One of the best ways to make underexposure work is by trying out the image in black and white. Most underexposed black and white images give a sense of mystery and obscurity. If you have not shot the image in black and white, then you can easily turn into one, using one of the photo editing software. Once you have the image you have to work on selected, open it in one of the editing software. We generally use Adobe Photoshop or Lightroom. If you have a coloured image, then convert it

to black and white. In Photoshop you can do it easily by clicking on Image>Adjustment>Black&White. Chances are that black and white will enhance the underexposed image, and make it more intriguing.

OTHER AUGMENTATIONS

The great thing about an underexposed image is how it can bring out details in an image. You can play with the saturation of the image and really make it stand out. If it is a black and white image, enhance the contrast, and the image is bound to bring out the details and textures.

**TEXT AND IMAGES:
ABHISHEK DESAI**

Use bracketing on your DSLR for great exposures

Bracketing in early era of photography was used to get the perfectly exposed shots, thanks to the limited number of exposures a film provided. But now in the digital era, we can all burn as many exposures as we want to practice and learn from bracketing techniques using our camera's exposure, white balance and flash photography settings. One can practice the various ways and means to bracket the exposure for images, including exposure-bracketing and white-balance-bracketing. Here's how to use both of these using your DSLR as both these techniques teach you to get a step better with your final images. So, let's look at how it can affect exposure and white balance.

EXPOSURE BRACKETING

Commonly known now as HDR or 'High Dynamic Range' photography.

You might have come across so many

shots with a wide "dynamic range", or bright areas coupled with shaded or dark areas and, in essence, have a "confused" meter reading from your camera. Do you expose

for the light area or dark? Do you use fill in flash or pull details from the dark areas in post processing? These are the questions you come across. Remember your subject



has to be still or you won't be able to get three exposures, as it's moving.

These are done with the help of exposure bracketing. Using bracketing while exposing your shots simply means you have the ability to be able to take three or more shots of the same scene, each with differing exposure, white balance or flash values. One is taken with a correct exposure according to the metering setting on your camera, one is underexposed and one is overexposed. The under and over exposed shots can be taken within a range of + or - 3 stops either way with half or third stop increments. By doing this, you can assess which of each represents the closest and most accurate exposure. By taking multiple exposures of the same, you are also able to make some creative and useful HDR images.

Note: For weddings, we would suggest shoot RAW for safety, you can then pull out other details during RAW processing. If you intend to try your hand at HDR photography while getting a shot, use a tripod. For example,

if your camera tells you that for the scene you are photographing, you need a shutter speed of 1/25th/sec and an aperture of F8. With exposure bracketing, and depending on whether you are in Tv (shutter priority) or Av (aperture priority) mode, you can alter the shutter speed or aperture for each shot. So, if you are in aperture priority mode and set up for a 1 stop bracketing shot, your camera will adjust the shutter speed and you will end up with the following three exposures, one at 1/25th/sec at F8 – correct exposure, the second one at 60th/sec at F8 – overexposed by 1 stop, and the third one at 250th/sec at F8 – underexposed by 1 stop. However, the problem here is that you are not in control of the shutter speed. This means that if the shutter speed goes too low to hold the camera in your hand during your exposure bracketing shot, we'd advise you shoot on tripod whenever experimenting.

These are all important factors to consider when exposure bracketing as each subtle change can alter the final "look and feel" of the image.

HDR stands for 'High Dynamic Range' and it is the process whereby multiple images are taken or multiple exposure versions of the same shot (taken from the same RAW file) are layered onto each other to create the perfect exposure. When done subtly, this effect is excellent for guaranteeing that you get the correct exposure every time.





Daylight



Flouroscent

WHITE BALANCE BRACKETING

White Balance bracketing is a function on your camera that compensates for different colours of light being emitted by different light sources. When a camera has been calibrated to correctly display white, then the camera is white balanced with the use of a grey card or just a plain white sheet of paper. Once it is calibrated for white, other colours should display properly. It is a way of calibrating a camera's colour response to take into account different colour temperatures of light (i.e., fluorescent light is greenish; sunlight, more blue; incandescent light, yellowish). This calibration allows the camera to define what the



With Bracketing

colour white is under any of these various lighting conditions. Failure to white balance your camera could result in an unsightly, unnatural colour cast.

With digital SLRs for example, you will normally find a yellow or red colour cast when using Auto White Balance in JPEG mode, particularly with Canon cameras shooting indoors. This is not a big deal and can easily be corrected in Photoshop using the colour correction tools. There are three main ways to get the correct setting for white balance;

Grey Card – Using a grey card to take a reading from the scene allows the camera to register in a particular colour temperature based on what it sees from the reference card. You set the camera to its custom WB mode and with whichever lens you're using, fill the frame with the grey or white card and take an exposure. The camera takes a second to process the information and will indicate whether

the custom WB is good or not. Once the custom WB is set, you revert back to shooting mode and all exposures taken will now reflect this colour balance until you adjust the WB setting again. The grey card method is relatively cheap since grey cards sell for ₹600 or less. This is the most commonly used method used by many photographers in the industry.

RAW - By shooting RAW you will be able to control the white balance of the shot even after you shoot it, during post processing. When your file is opened, you can adjust the white balance or colour temperature to whatever setting looks correct for your shot. This is the best way of making minor adjustments to a shot and the easiest way to work through.

Bracketing - If you are fairly confident that the white balance setting you are using is close to being right, or if indeed you are using Auto White Balance, you

can almost guarantee the correct setting by bracketing the shots. As with exposure bracketing, you can take three shots with differing WB settings. One will be as you or the camera set it, one will be higher or warmer and one will be lower or cooler. You can vary the increments according to your camera's allowances (i.e. 1/3rd, 1/2 stops). We would recommend that if your camera has this feature, make sure you practice this in all the different situations you can, i.e. indoors with flash, indoors without flash, outdoors in particularly colourful areas such as green fields, and with scenes that have differing colour or lighting situation. These are just a few examples where you can use the setting and experiment in case there are any places we have missed and you have already shot do send in your pictures. Until then, Happy Reading!

TEXT AND IMAGES: USHMA DHAMDHARE

Using **depth** to your **advantage**



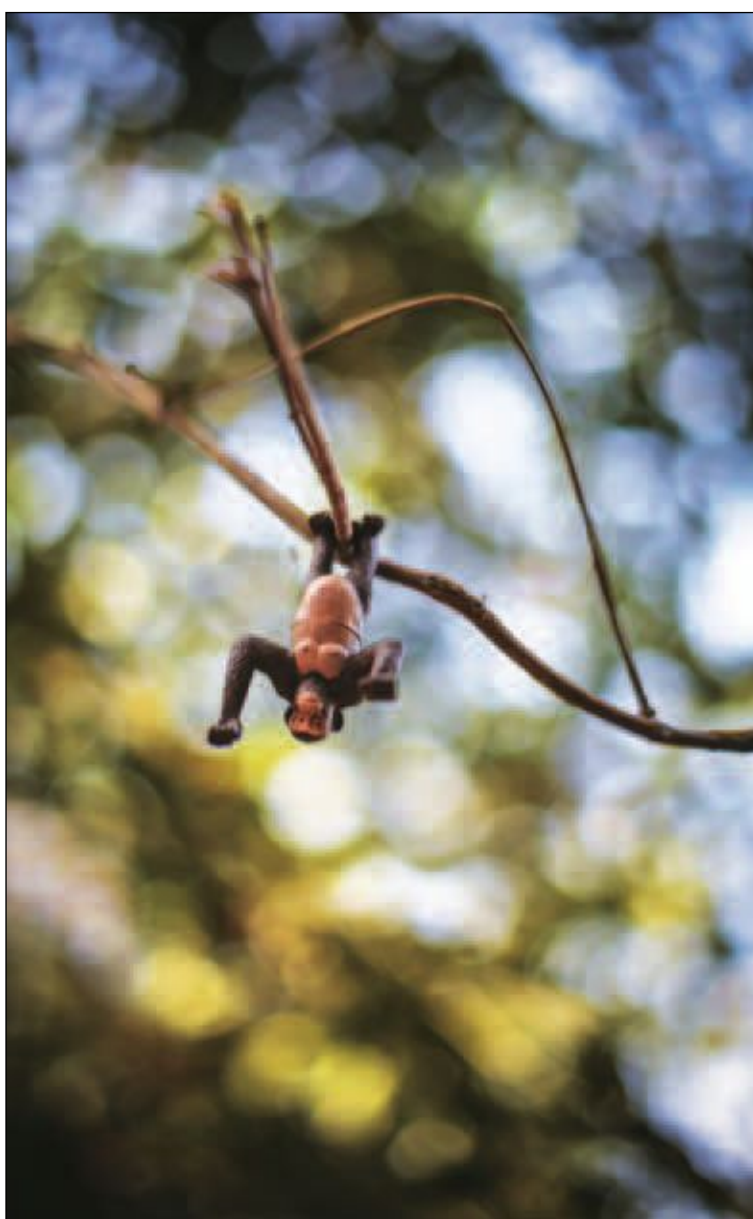
Whenever we talk about composing a shot the first thing that comes to our mind is Depth of Field (DOF). Sometimes you may also wonder why you should care if your pictures are in focus. All of us talk a lot about Depth of Field in most of our articles. Based on the assumption that we all understand that in layman's terms, 'depth of field' is the portion of an image that is in sharp focus to illustrate. For example, in landscape photography, generally you're working to achieve a very large depth of field, and you want everything in the scene to be in sharp focus. On the other hand, with portraits, photographers are often shooting for a more shallow depth of field, focussing on their subjects and working towards fall off or blur in the background. Why do you think this is the case? Clearly, to draw focus to the story being told. But what if you want to tell a different story or what if you want to tell the same story in a different way? In this article, we are going to just talk about field and some ways you can use foreground

in a different way to draw a different kind of attention to the story you're trying to tell. Here are three ways to create "story telling images" using foreground to achieve creative depth of field.

FOREGROUND:

The frame of the foliage around a subject draws the attention right to it. It focuses more on the





story of the image. However, if foreground is done too much in the image, it can make your image distracting. You need to be aware of that and be sure to make foreground work for you, not against you. Take multiple shots, and figure how much blur/sharp is required and then hit the shutter for your final shot. We guess in this digital era, raking a few extra shots to be sure cannot be harmful. Just don't overdo it.

OUT OF FOCUS - ON PURPOSE

When you're shooting a portrait, you're generally trying to visualise and deliver a certain kind of mood through your image: happy, proud, in love and so on. Generally, the mood is created through posing, expressions and a lot on the lighting conditions and set ups.

Close up! To put it in simple words, if you really want to throw the background out of focus, get really close to your subject. Even an extreme wide-angle lens like a Nikkor 14-24mm f/2.8 has a really shallow depth of field when the subject is six inches (15 centimetres) in front of the lens. Getting close to your subject has a huge influence on the background sharpness. Relative subject distance matters a lot too. Separating your subject from its background by a large relative factor is a powerful way to control depth of field.

GET LOWER TO THE GROUND

This sounds really stupid why a low angle? But consider this: If you are standing up while taking a picture of a flower on the ground, then the



background behind the flower is virtually the same distance away. But if you get down low, the background is now much, much farther away and perfectly out of focus.

CAMERA MATTERS

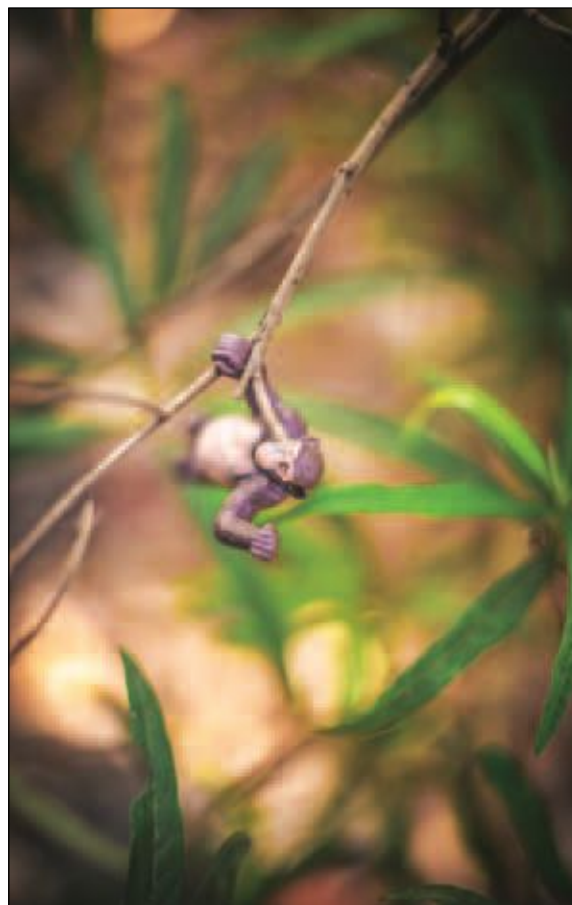
Get a bigger camera. If you have a point-and-shoot then get a digital SLR. If you have a small-chip DSLR, then get a full-frame DSLR. If you really want out of focus, get an 8x10 camera. The physics of lenses is such that the larger the actual film or sensor, the less depth of field you have. And if the background is a perfectly plain sky it probably doesn't need to be out of focus at all. Point-and-shoots have extremely short focal-length lenses, resulting in just about everything being in focus no matter what you do.





LENSES

The longer the lens, the less depth of field. Wide angles have more depth of field and telephotos have much less. Buy a tilt-and-shift lens and use it wrongly. The tilt part is what comes into play here. The effect of tilting the lens to produce more depth of field has been known almost since the beginning of photography. And generally that's what a tilt-and-shift lens is used for (besides keeping tall buildings from falling over). But there is nothing to keep the creative photographer from doing it "wrong" - tilting it the other way and decreasing the depth of field by a lot. It can look very arty and creative.



A LENSBABY MAYBE

This is a tilt-and-shift lens (minus the shift part); combined with a lens element that makes the edges of the image pretty soft to begin with. Great fun to play with and it gives you a lot of control over depth of field. Experimenting with this makes it the best tool for you if you are interested in hardcore depth of field play.

PHOTOSHOP

Most software today gives you abundant options to blur a picture and then paint back detail where you want it. But realise that when you do this you are seriously getting into the world of "fiction" photography. It might be beautiful and dramatic, but be very careful that you don't represent the resulting photograph as being "nonfiction".

Depth of field is a simple concept, but the ways it can be arranged to create powerful images are endless. The more you experiment with it the better images you will get with time. If you already do what we have mentioned, send in your images, we'd love to see them. Until then, Happy Shooting!

TEXT AND IMAGES:
USHMA DHAMDHERE

10 DSLR TWEAKS FOR BETTER PICTURES

When you pick up a new DSLR it takes a little while for you to get used to it. The functions, the dial the settings everything takes a little while for you to adapt. What if we tell you there are some easy minor tweaks that you can do in the DSLR that can make your life even easier? Ever wish you could customise your DSLR to make it work exactly the way you wanted? Or to make it better somehow—to make the operation faster, to boost the battery stamina, to match a specific shooting situation better, or even to make it a special-purpose camera? You can pretty much do everything with it; with adjustments ranging from simple, no-cost setting tweaks to physical modification of the camera, you can turn the the whole thing around.

1

REASSIGNMENT OF AUTOFOCUS TO BACK OR THE FUNC- TION BUTTON

This is probably the most universal tweak amongst pros and serious amateurs, this tweak helps you change the autofocus triggering from the shutter release button to an another button. Everyone from landscape photographers to action shooters values this ability of the DSLR to focus and recompose and/or focus and meter a different area of the scene making it a useful and fulfilling change to the custom settings.



2



AUTO ISO

Until recently a function found only on compact cameras, auto ISO is migrating up into DSLRs, and we hear from serious shooters who have embraced it. This mode allows you to lock in an f-stop and shutter speed - or a specified range of settings - and the camera will automatically vary the ISO for proper exposure. If you're shooting sports, wildlife, or other action subjects in changeable light, auto ISO might be the way to go.

4

POP-UP FLASH SYNC

The default setting is first-curtain sync, which is fine for everyday snapshots. But if you like to combine flash with slower shutter speeds for action-defining ghosts, set the pop-up to second-curtain sync. This will smear a ghost image behind, rather than ahead of, a subject moving across the frame.

3

POP-UP FLASH EXPOSURE COMPENSATION

The best setting for the built-in flash output is up to -1 or -1.3 EV for "walking around" mode. This way, you're ready to take people pictures with partial fill that will look more natural than a full-power pop.

5

POP-UP FLASH SLOW SYNC

Most DSLRs with the pop-up enabled will override auto exposure if it will drop the shutter speed below a certain level (often, around 1/60 sec). So a scene that needs a slow shutter speed for correct background exposure ends up looking like a flash snapshot. You can prevent this by changing the default flash setup to slow sync.

6



CUSTOM FUNCTION(S)

Most custom functions (CFs) are pretty limited - defining which way a dial turns for plus or minus, that sort of thing. But a perusal of recent camera menus showed quite an assortment of possibilities: compositional grid lines, the embedment of an authenticity stamp in image files, autofocus micro adjustment, correction of distortion and chromatic aberration, catch-in focus. If you haven't reviewed all the custom functions available on your camera, we recommend doing so. You may find some hidden gems.

7

DEFINING A USER PROFILE

Most DSLRs now let you save multiple camera setups, either through the menus or on a mode dial, such as on the Sony A7II that we recently reviewed for this month's issue. You can set it up for different types of shooting, for multiple users, or for quick changes in the heat of the shoot - for instance, nature shooter Jon Cornforth recommends setting two different modes for the lighting conditions on either side of a boat when photographing whales.



8

VERTICAL BATTERY GRIPS

These attachments provide a number of benefits. They allow composing verticals with a more natural and secure grip. The extra battery power provides for more shots, and in some cases, faster bursts. Some have space to carry extra batteries. On relatively small cameras, such as the Canon EOS 550D, the grips make the cameras friendlier to big hands.



9

EXTERNAL STORAGE

If you're shooting huge and/or a lot of files, an external drive may make more sense than a pile of memory cards. Devices such as Canon's Wireless File Transmitter WFT-E4 II A can upload images to a computer as you shoot them. In the field? Carry a Wi-Fi enabled portable drive.



10

EYE-FI CARDS

Possibly the most elegant Wi-Fi camera connection there is, Eye-Fi is an SD memory card with a built-in transmitter that can automatically upload your pictures to a computer or social networking site, or directly to a Smartphone or tablet.



TEXT: USHMA DHAMDHERE



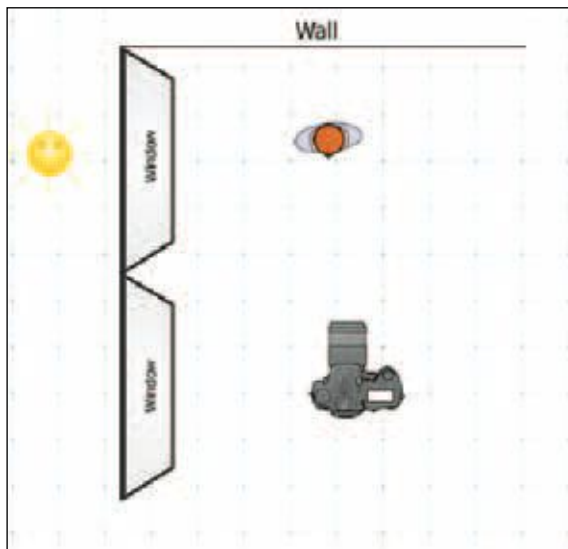
Product Photography in Available light

One of the main aspects of e-commerce depends on the quality of the images defining them; you only buy a product online if you like how it looks. When we talk about beautiful product images, it's not just the aesthetics that we are considering, but also the other aspects of it. Showcasing your products with high-quality images can increase the number of sales from two to four if displayed correctly. But when you're just starting out, getting your product photos shot can be intimidating because good photography can be expensive. There are hundreds of product photography tools to help you get the job done yourself. As business owners that keen on learning, we understand this more than anyone, and as a company that works with small businesses every day, we also know that sometimes the money's just not there to get it done. That's when you start and do it yourself or you get someone who can do all of it without much hassle. If either one of that is you, and your budget is tight, here is how you can shoot your product in the available light and make the most of time and the little money that you have to shoot given by a client or your own brand.

If you've been struggling to take good product images and haven't been happy with your results, it's not necessarily because you're a bad photographer, it's just that it's not the easiest thing to master. Many professional photographers spend years honing and perfecting this talent.

With that said, however, there are certainly a number of things you can do to improve your product photography (and before you start worrying you'll need to invest in new camera equipment, rest assured that these tips don't require that).

Lighting: Photography is all about the light, so you'll want to make sure that while taking these shots your products are perfectly lit and there's no detail that's missing. It's always best to start off using natural light (i.e the sun) and master it. Natural light is soft, always available (barring any major earthly



catastrophe, of course), predictable and easy to work with. Pick your biggest north-facing window, put a table next to it and play around with how the light hits your product.

Position: It can be really helpful to

buyers when you 'stage' your product by including other objects.

For example, if you're shooting apparels, picturing a model wearing it (either a mannequin or a real person) would be the best way to shoot it in layman's term. This gives the audience a clearer idea of what to expect when they wear the same piece of apparel.

Angles: If you're selling exclusively online, customers won't be able to physically touch or handle your product so you will want to show them as much as possible about your item to help eliminate any questions or uncertainty. Go crazy with your photos and take many different angles of your product i.e. Shoot from the side, top, bottom, etc. And don't forget to include close-up shots. People love to see texture and the little details that make up your product. I know that when I buy online, a seller can almost never provide too many photos of a product, and photos are

the first things I look at before buying anything online.

Background: The first thing that comes into our minds after we decide everything is background. It depends, some people prefer an all-white background. It's clean, simple and straightforward. Others prefer to use backgrounds with patterns that complement the product. There are many different ways to achieve great shots and each has their own challenges and benefits, so it comes down more to personal preference and what works for your products. Also remember to keep the background tidy and remove all distracting elements that may draw attention from your product (this will be especially important if you're not using a backdrop).

Tripod: With product photography a tripod definitely comes in very handy – especially if you're shooting a lot of products all at once. For mainly three reasons:





- They keep the camera steady (blurry shots = unusable shots)
- They keep the camera in the same exact position so your angle will stay the same for every image
- They free up your hands so that you can reposition your products to take different angles



Sharpness: There's almost nothing worse than a blurry or an out of focus photograph. It looks unprofessional and also doesn't do the product justice. Your product has to be undeniably sharp. The best ways to ensure this is by making sure of the below points:

- Hold the camera steady – If you have trouble with this, then use a tripod or set your camera down on

something stable.

- Control your focus point – If you have a DSLR, you likely have the ability to choose a particular focus point within your frame. Use this to select the focus point closest to the area you want most in focus.

- Make sure you're shooting with enough light – The darker it is, the harder it will be for you to get your camera to focus properly, so be sure

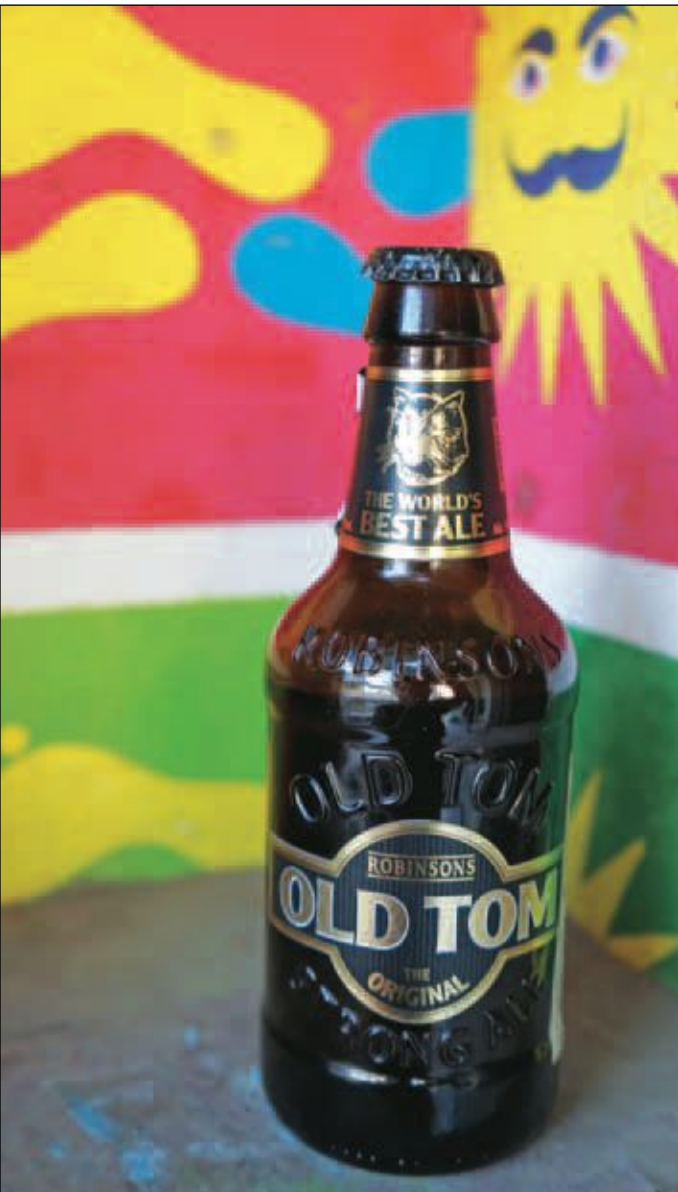
you're photographing with enough light.

- View your image at 100% –

After you've taken an image, use your camera's viewfinder to zoom in to 100% and scroll around your image. Is your product sharp or does it look a bit soft? Because you're probably shooting digitally, you can take as many photos as you need to, till you make sure you get your shot.

Edit: No matter how good of a photographer you are, most of your images can use a little cleaning up.

After you've taken your photos, open up your photo-editing programme of choice (I use Lightroom and occasionally Photoshop, but even included or free programmes like



Windows Live Photo Gallery or Picasa will do fine) and do a little adjusting. Here are some tweaks you may want to perform:

- Cropping – While it's usually good to frame and compose your subject correctly when you're taking your photo, it's not always possible to get it just right. Now's the time to crop tighter or straighten out your images.

- Exposure – If your photo is a little under-exposed (too dark) or over-exposed (too light), then use the exposure slider to adjust appropriately. Don't go too crazy with it, though, usually a light touch will give the best results.

- Retouch – If you notice a bit of dust or other unwanted blob in your image, try finding and using the tool that helps you remove that. You don't need a fancy editor to do this, either. I've found that the Windows Live

Photo Gallery editor does a really good job of this – I was pleasantly surprised.

There are lots of techniques for taking a good product photograph, and incorporating these techniques while shooting with available light can be a little more difficult – but not impossible to achieve with practice and experiment over the period of time. Below are some Do's and Don'ts that you should keep in mind while shooting products in available light.

DOs

DO try to take your photo at the brightest light (usually between late morning and early afternoon), because at these hours, sunlight is at its brightest and illuminates sufficient lighting near windows or in the shade which helps you get a better exposure. Avoid too much light as well.

DO notice where the shadows



PHOTO: RITESH UTTAMCHANDANI



PHOTO: RITESH UTTAMCHANDANI

fall if shooting with a window with a grill or a blind as these shadows might hide the important detail of your product. Remember, nothing is bad if shadows used correctly and creatively can deliver you amazing results.

DO remember the amount of light that comes and also, the colour of the light around changes depending on the time of day. Plan to take your product shots at roughly the same time of day for consistent photos. For example, the light in early morning is brighter and is little less colourful, whereas the light in the afternoon/evening more often has a warm undertone that brings out greater contrast in your shots. You can always saturate the colours in the image and make it look a little cooler in post-production if you want a cool-tone, dark image.

DON'TS

DON'T place your product

behind your light source i.e. you should not be facing both the product and the light source, you'll get a really dark photo or a very bright image depending on your camera settings, so always keep a check on the position of your product to avoid that.

DON'T position your product more than one foot away from the light source that is your window if you're shooting indoors. Logically, the further away you are from your light source, the less light your product will get. Also, avoid using a harsh stream of sunlight. You can weaken the light source by covering the window with a thin, solid curtain or various types of paper or just a plain simple white sheet of paper.

DON'T forget to focus the product well. Producing a nicely-arranged photo of your product in use can be really effective and natural lighting can often produce beautiful effects, but make

sure you also have a simple, well-lit photo of your product that's free from distraction for the audience to define and differentiate it from others.

Spend a little time thinking about what you want to convey about not only your product but your brand. Your imagery will be a factor in how customers perceive your company so ensure your images reflect your message correctly. To sum up, I could go on and on about how to improve your product photography since it's a pretty big and challenging task. But I think you'll find that once you get into your groove and start taking more and more photos of your products, you'll learn what works best for you and which angles help show off your products' best features. It does take time and practice to take great product shots, but I promise it gets easier.

TEXT AND IMAGES:
USHMA DHAMDHERE

AMBROSIA

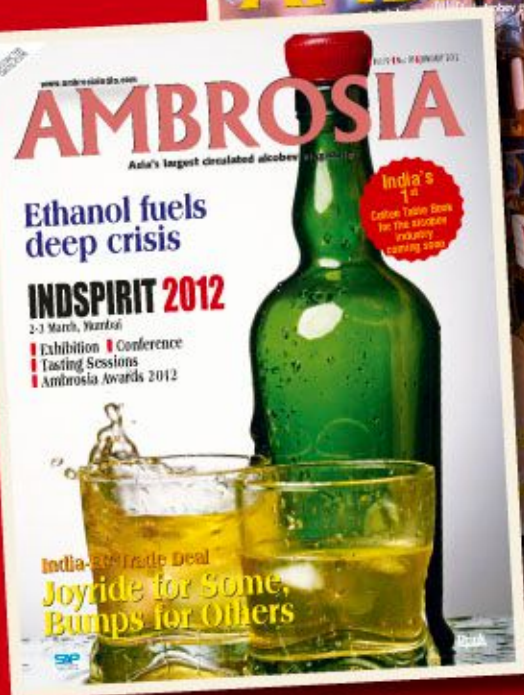
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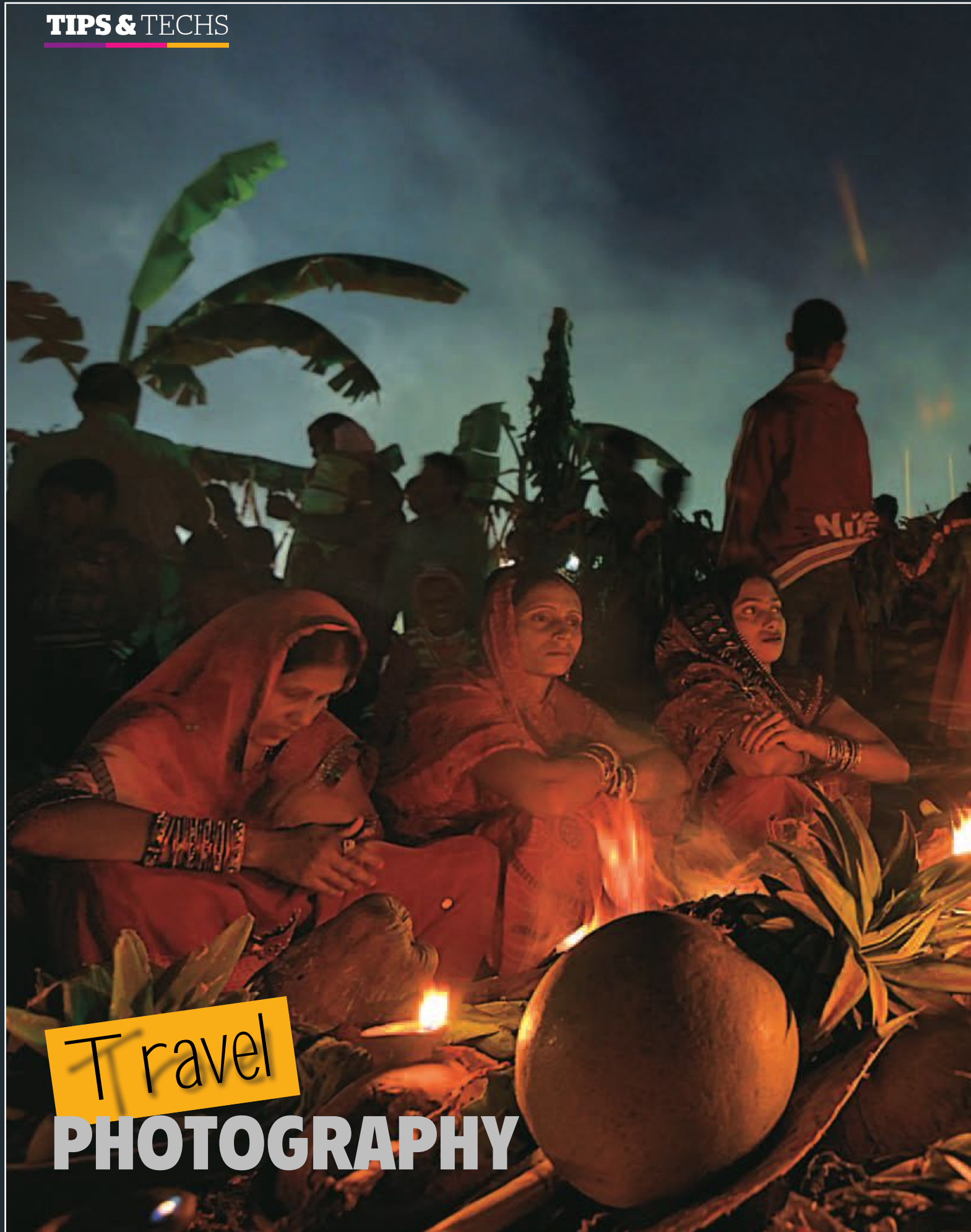
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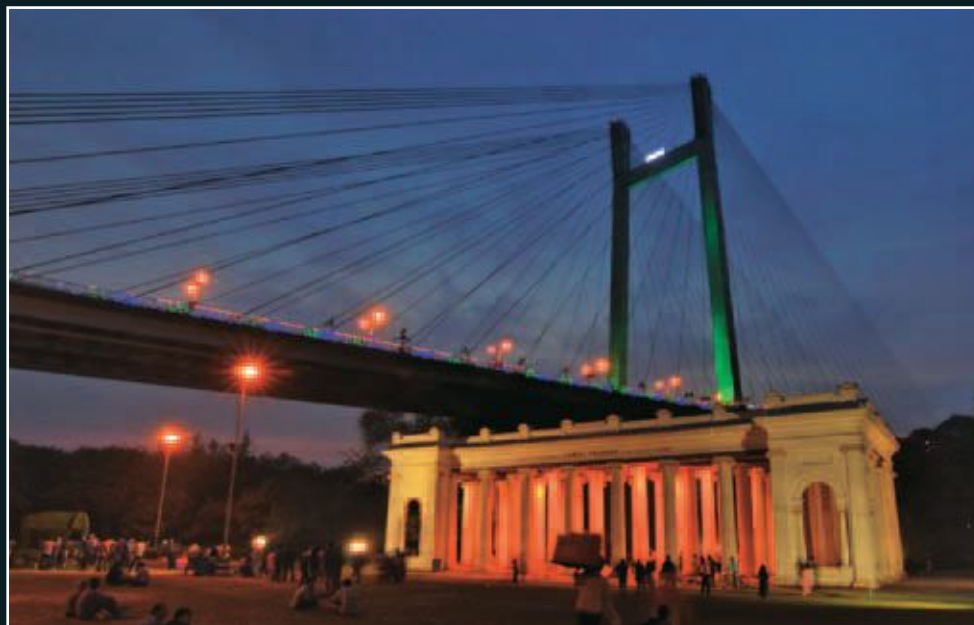
Travel
PHOTOGRAPHY





THE ART OF TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY

They say that a camera is essentially a device that captures a photograph, but this ideally is a technical phenomenon. 'Photography' however is quite different from it. In fact, photography is a blend of technology and art. Like any other subject, it has a number of branches and 'Travel Photography' is one of them. There are number of things that one has to consider while shooting travel and some of these include where to shoot, when to shoot, why to shoot and even how to shoot? So an experience gathered in travel photography can be expressed, exchanged or even described in words yet there are some things that are not possible to express in words. Only then a photograph becomes a



vivid document of a particular travel.

Being born and brought up in North Bengal, since childhood I have had regular opportunities to travel through different places in North Bengal. It was fairly early in the game that I realised that I would like to devour the natural beauty and got interested in travel photography.

So, below I have highlighted some of the things that I have kept in mind and also learned over the past 4 years with my stint with travel photography.

BEFORE PLANNING

One should be well aware of the place, its climate and conveyance. In this context, I would like to appraise that for the Terai and the Dooars best and convenient season is before the advent of the monsoon i.e. June, July and

again before winter, i.e. October onwards. If you want to take photos of hard to access places, you should take help of Google Maps from Internet to point out exact location of the place and with the help of local people try to get to there. Golden period of the day to shoot better are early in the morning and dusk. To use it, try to be in a lonely place. It would be better if you have a personal vehicle.

FOLLOW YOUR INSTINCTS AND FOCUS ON THE PLACE

Travel photography can be a challenging and sometimes risky affair. In this job there are a lot of restrains from different corners, which mainly include natural, social, legal and accessibility limitations. I am not sure as to how the inspiration from within myself – impels me to take snaps



which, I am sure, could hardly be defined or described in words. But what I have learnt in my time shooting travel is that one must always follow his instinct. For instance, to get a good travel photograph one should not only pay importance towards the people, rather the place should be given importance too, so that it conveys the essence of

that region and the people.

WHEN TO SHOOT?

This is an important factor and it tends to differ from place to place. Therefore one must have a know-how in advance of the place. Such as a scene of weekly market



in a tea garden, one should choose the timing when the market is in full swing. On the other hand, to take a snap of a monument or a shrine, the suitable timing must be before or after the retreat of thronging visitors. Sometimes, affable and candid attitude towards the local people may open a thought that I have never thought of and consequently this helps me collect new information and may change the way of shooting completely but much more vividly.

WHERE TO SHOOT?

Much like the time that you would like to shoot, it is important for you to know what/where to shoot as well. So this means that one needs to do their homework about the place in advance. Apart from this it is important to ensure the objective behind shooting a place as well. For instance you can never go to a forest to shoot table-tops, as it is best suited for a studio setting. Similarly

in travel what and where to shoot is something that you need to work before hand. Naturally nothing goes as planned most of the times so a certain amount of improvisation is very important.

WHAT TO CARRY?

Apart from the knowledge of the area and time, your gear and camera plays an important role as well. So the luggage must be smartly packed i.e. portable yet with all necessities. It is also important that your hands remain free from burdens so that cameras could be used in no time. It should always be kept in mind that what camera I have is less important than what I am going to shoot. A traveller might only have a point-and-shoot camera but those who are a little bit serious, they should have digital SLR cameras.

LENSES



While there are no specifics in this department each photographer has his own preferences. And a right lens can make or break your image. For instance when you shoot a landscape, then a wide-angle lens like 11-16 mm can be a good option, but when you shoot portraits, then a fixed focal like the 50mm or the 35mm is a must. Again when you shoot a wild animal from far off or any candid subject, then 70-300mm is necessary. Since we don't have the sort of liberty to carry so many lenses and also most of the times the environment is not so conducive to changing the lenses easily, I recommend a versatile lens which will allow you to take pictures of almost all types of situation.

RESPECT BOUNDARIES AND PERMISSIONS

Most of the photographers forget to respect restrictions and boundaries. For instance, if you are shooting people portraits, we should interact with them and try to get the best expression. Where permission from competent authority is necessary, we should not ignore or neglect. One should not cause disturbance or nuisance to anyone. No one should come in the way of natural movement of wild animals just to take photographs.

Keeping these things in mind have helped me a lot when it comes to travel photography and hopefully it will help you guys as well.



**Arup
Biswas**

IMAGES AND TEXT: ARUP BISWAS

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DIY - Snoot

A snoot is a tube like object that fits over a studio light or flash, and allows the photographer to control the direction and radius of the light beam. When making one, snoot is one of those things that you can make out of almost anything and everything around you. Today we are going to help you to fabricate a makeshift snoot from a plastic bottle.



1

Obtain plastic bottle cut it in half



2 Cut it from between and make it into a cone



3 Take the black chart paper and cut it out



4 Wrap the black chart paper around the bottle



5 Attach the snoot to the flash

6

It's ready!



TEXT AND IMAGES:
USHMA DHAMDHARE

Mobile Photojournalism

PHOTO: ABHISHEK DESAI

In this digital age, photography has permeated into the public and become mass market. With everybody owning a cellphone, and with every cellphone having a camera, photography is not just a professional's sport anymore. Mobile phones have made photography more accessible and today everyone has become a photographer, in one way or the other.

Mobile cameras are the new DSLR, and manufacturers are increasingly launching advanced phone cameras, photography apps and more. There are many phone cameras now that can rival an actual DSLRs. With everyone having a camera on them, recording events, sights and incidents has become a lot easier, and citizens are becoming photojournalists in their own way. Mobile photojournalism

is increasingly becoming popular and even professionals always have their iPhone camera handy to record any event or incident.

In this article, we are going to discuss some of the advantages of using a mobile camera for photojournalism and some of the ways how you can improve yourself at mobile photojournalism.

Ease of use

One of the biggest advantages of using a phone for photojournalism is the ease of use of the phone. A phone camera is always on the person; hence one never is worried about not having carried their bulky DSLR camera with them. You will probably always carry your phone, and if there is a fire in the neighbourhood, you can whip out your phone and snap a couple of pictures instantly.

Functionality

Another big advantage of mobile camera is the functionality. Once you have clicked a photo of any event, you do not have to worry about removing your memory card and transferring it to a computer and then emailing it. With a cellphone, you can simply go to your photo gallery, and in two taps you can email the picture to your



PHOTO: ABHISHEK DESAI



PHOTO: ABHISHEK DESAI



PHOTO: ABHISHEK DESAI

MOBILE PHOTOJOURNALISM STORIES

During Superstorm Sandy, *Time* magazine assigned five photojournalists armed with cellphones to cover the 2012 calamity. The photojournalists uploaded the photos they shot to *Time* mag's Instagram account live, thus reaching a wide audience without wasting any time.

On Indian shores, well-known photojournalists like Ritesh Uttamchandani were involved with the Scroll.in's Instagram project to document the Indian elections via mobile images. The project took a different path from the usual news photographs, and steered towards unconventional, voter's perspective of the election, making it more intimate than the cliché candidate waving shots. Except for the Indian publications, the project was much well-received, and written about in *Huffington Post*, *Wired*, *TIME*, and *British Journal of Photography* among others. Ritesh says what the Indian media needs to figure out is digital; mobile photography, cellphone journalism. "Digital is a format that hardly anyone from the Indian media has been able to crack. But mobile photography is the way forward," said Ritesh.

news desk. It saves a lot of time, and there is no hassle or carrying a laptop around.

Handiness

Generally when it comes to news images, news agencies and dailies require basic photographs, with no retouching. Manipulation of images is against the ethics of photojournalism.



PHOTO: RITESH UTTAMCHANDANI

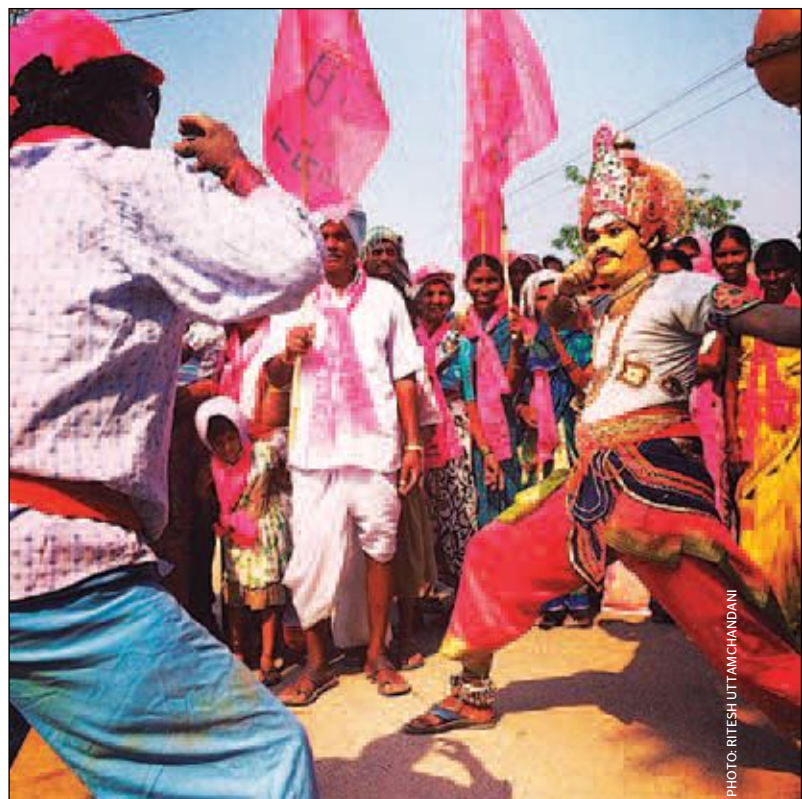


PHOTO: RITESH UTTAMCHANDANI

Altering the image in any way is not allowed, especially changing the colours, or editing out a person or reproducing it. However, some things might vary from publication to publication, the majority of the rules remain the same. Depending on that, one can use the phone apps to do certain changes to the images if permitted. For example, if you have clicked a photo of a person from a

distance, and wanted only a mugshot, you can quickly crop the picture on any editing app on the phone and email the image to the desk; Unlike some DSLR wherein you would need a computer to do the cropping/ editing.

Connectivity and Reach

With the cellphone you have a quicker reach to a wider audience. After you have shot your intense photojournalistic shot of a protest, you can directly upload it to Facebook, Instagram or other social networking websites with just a few taps. Your image will have a much quicker reach to a wider audience.

WHAT TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN DOING PHOTOJOURNALISM ON A PHONE

Have a strategy

If you are intentionally stepping out on an assignment, with a cellphone, plan in advance. Keep your phone fully charged. Make sure there is enough free space on it. Map out your assignment location. Your phone will be handy tool for this, as you can

pin-drop a location on maps.

Be ready

With photojournalism, it is all about timing. It has a lot to do with capturing unexpected moments. Make sure you have your phone in your hand at all times, if you are at any event or protest or celebration. You should have your camera app open and ready, as you never know when what might take place.

Use Burst Mode

With photojournalism, one must make sure that you are not aiming to take just one shot. One second you might see your subject do one thing, but next second it might be something completely different. You have to capture all these shots. By doing this, you are making sure that if you have gotten one frame blurry, or the subject's face is not visible, probably in your next shot the face will be. iPhone offers a burst mode, and that's great to capture multiple shots. Depending on the manufacturer, some Android phone cameras offer burst mode. If you don't have one, there are tons of apps out in the market that let you use burst mode.



PHOTO: RITESH UTTAMCHANDANI

Focus and Exposure

Without proper focus or exposure, your image will mean nothing. While it is creative and artsy to click out-of-focus and underexposed shots, in Photojournalism it is important that your viewer can clearly see what's happening. You must ensure that the phone camera focuses on your subject or scene properly. Many a times it happens when shooting on the phone, the camera is still focusing while you click a picture. To make sure this doesn't happen, tap on the screen where you want the phone camera to focus before clicking. While the phone camera adjusts the exposure automatically, there are some camera phones which offer exposure settings. You can also download apps that will let you increase or decrease the exposure level.

Post-processing

As discussed earlier, one does not have a lot of liberties with post-processing, if shooting for actual journalistic purpose. However, minor cropping or rotating the frame is acceptable, as long as there is no severe photo-manipulation done. If



PHOTO: RITESH UTTAMCHANDANI

you are shooting photojournalistic images purely for a personal project, documentation or artistic reasons, then you have a plethora of apps that will help you edit the image. Instagram is one app which is highly popular

with mobile photojournalists. Also, it's worthwhile to follow Instagram accounts of reputed photojournalists for inspiration.

Copyright

When Instagram announced that it was planning to change the terms of service to be able to sell images for advertising without the photographer's permission, there was an outrage sparked. However, the CEO later clarified that this was not going to happen and Instagram was to maintain its original TOS. However, there are endless times when photographer's pictures have been used by third parties without consent from Instagram or other social platforms. One of the ways to ensure this doesn't happen is watermarking. Though watermarking an image is always not aesthetic, it's one of the ways to keep your image secure. is not always advisable, it is one of the ways to ensure there is no copyright infringement. We had done a detailed article named 'How to protect your mobile images online' in our July 2014 edition, you can refer to that for more tips.

TEXT: ABHISHEK DESAI



PHOTO: RITESH UTTAMCHANDANI



APP REVIEWS

This section brings you the reviews of all the new and noteworthy apps available on the various platforms

Instacollage Pro is a simple photo collage and photo editing application developed to meet the demands of the ever increasing needs of Instagrammers. The app is easy to use and neatly presented. Available for both iOS and Android users, it is one of the most useful apps for people who like cellphone photography. In this issue we explore the app's features – collage making, stitching, framing and more in detail.

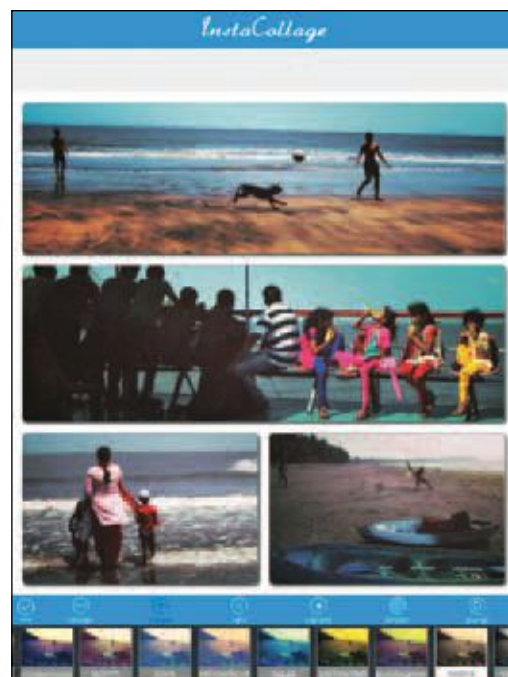
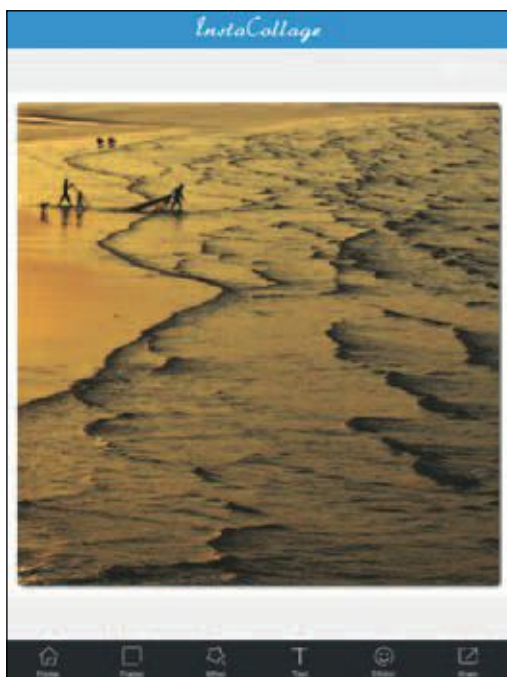
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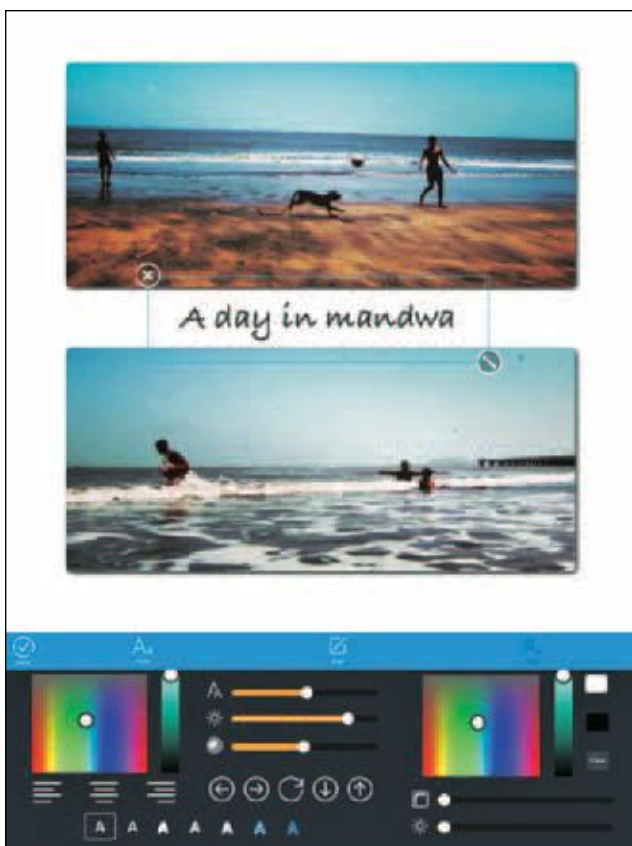
Selecting a layout

The home screen has photographs of different collage layouts that the app has to offer. Instacollage has more than 80 layouts in the free version. The layouts are neat, and easy to view on an iPad, though it might be a bit tedious to look at in a smaller mobile phone screen. Scrolling to the right brings out more layout options. Clicking on 'more' asks you to buy the full version that costs 0.99\$ (Approximately ₹60). The full version adds new content everyday including more layouts, stickers and photo frames. There is a toolbar at the bottom of the home screen where you can view your gallery of previous collages.

Selecting and editing images

Once the layout has been selected the screen shows the empty layout. You can tap on the empty boxes to get further options. It lets you either choose images from your gallery or take photos. The best part about choosing photos is that multiple photos can be selected at once and do not need to be sorted one at a time. You can simply move your thumb around to select the part of the photo that will be in the collage. But there are no options to interchange photographs in between the tiles. If you want the layout in a specific order, you need to select the photos one tile at a time.





Selecting a frame and adding effects

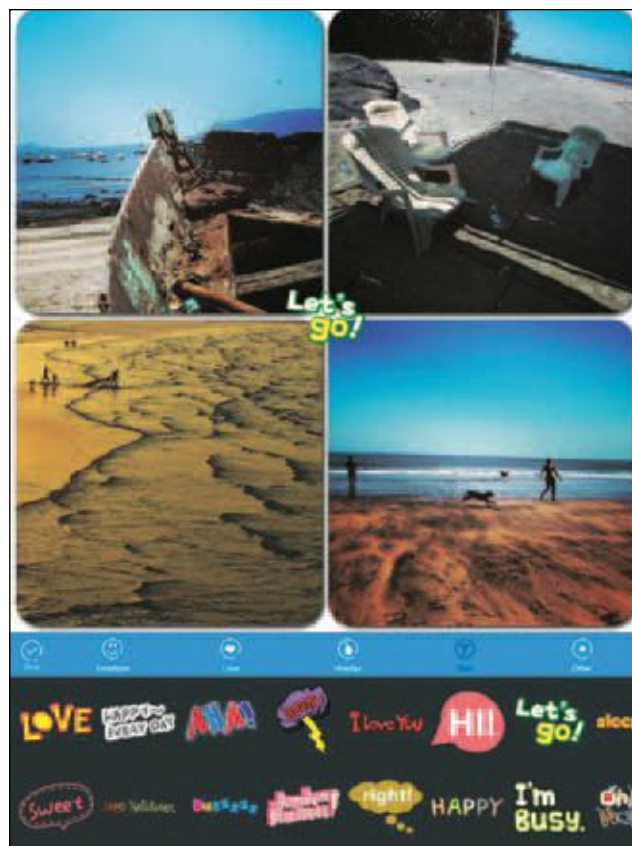
Now that the layout is done, there are options to add photo frames to it as well. Just click on 'frames' in the bottom toolbar and a variety of options appear. There are options to reduce/increase the curvature of the edges and to add gradients in the background. You can also choose a frame colour and a background colour as well. The effects are surprisingly accurate in terms of colour rendition. It is divided into parts such as vintage, classic, light etc. These parts have subparts as well. Again, the full version has a lot more options than the free one. This array of options might seem overwhelming at first but you get used to it.

Adding a text

The app has left no stone unturned in terms of feature and usability. They have also added an option to add text to the collage. Even here, you get to select your desired font, font colour and more. By just tapping on any of the fonts will select it and also let you preview it. Once selected, changing font box size and placement of font can be made just by dragging it. You can also delete the font if you do not like it.

Adding stickers

The app allows you to add stickers/smiley as many users share the collage in Whatsapp or sent it to a friend via



other messaging apps. There are a variety of stickers available and the placement of stickers can also be changed. This again has sub categories like emoticons, love, holiday, text etc. And if you feel you are not happy with the text option, there are text emoticons as well. In short this app has left nothing to chance and has packed anything and everything they could think of.

Sharing

Sharing your collage has never been easier. With just one click of a button you get options to share your photos on popular networking websites like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Flickr etc. You can also email it to your friends or save it to your mobile or iPad for later viewing. There is also an option on top to change the resolution of the photo and it comes in three sizes: Small (800x800), Mid (1000x1000) and Big (2000x2000).

Opinion

Instacollage Pro developed by click2mobile is a power packed application. Just 42 MB in size and it packs a whole bunch of features. We tested it on the iPad Mini, and there was no lag whatsoever. The interface is easy to use, tidy and simplistic. With ever increasing numbers of Instagrammers and their demands for apps like this have become very common. But Instacollage Pro stands out from the rest because of its versatility and ease of use.

TEXT & IMAGES : SOURADEEP ROY

PHOTO ESSAY



A child looks on in a playful mood during studies



Children look into the camera as they take a break

Schooling in Dharavi

About one million people live in Asia's largest slum - Dharavi. Located in the heart of Mumbai, the economic capital of India, this slum houses people migrating from all over India to follow their dreams. The people live in dire conditions and hope for a better tomorrow every day. This photo story explores hope, through the eyes of the next generation, the children in Dharavi.

There are a handful of

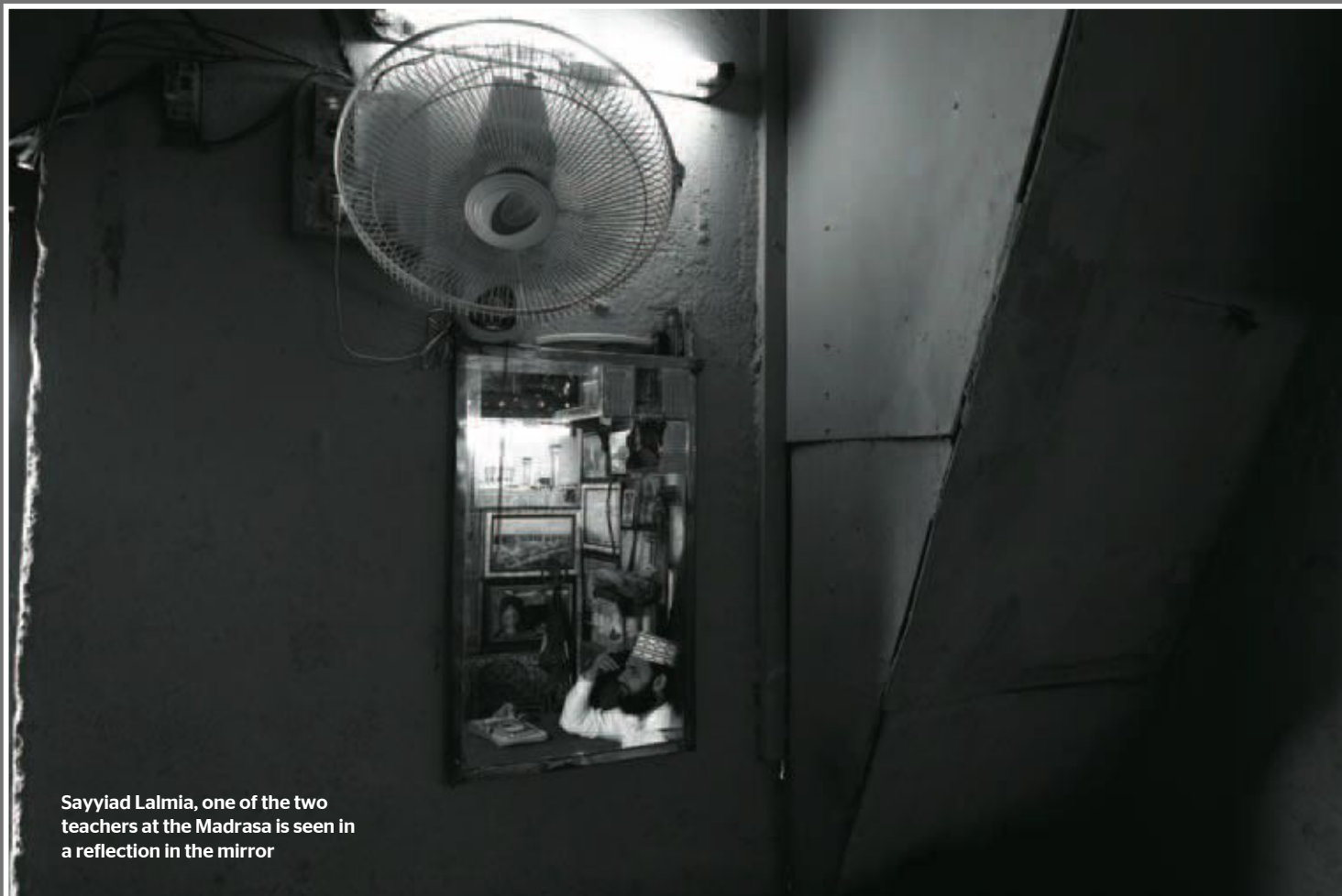
schools in this vastly populated area. Madrasa Gausia Gulshane Bhagdar is one such school. Funded by Baba Lalmia Kakri Trust, a small one room 'kothi', with a signboard above the gate is what comprises of the school. Approximately 35 students study in this school, ranging from five year olds to 16 -17 year olds. This school was started seventeen years ago. Sayyid Lalmia is one of the only two teachers of this institution.

The school or madrasa has a strict curriculum. It provides religious teachings in Hifz - the memorisation of the *Holy Quran*. Many of these children are pulled out from schools to work for their parents, to support the family, a handful only remain in schools every year. "Because kids get distracted easily and commit to the world of crime, we are trying to set the right goal for them, make them better human beings and give them hope through our teachings. We show them the way of *Allah*. By the time they leave the madrasa they will be ready for an honest life," says Sayyid.

Life in Dharavi is arduous, and these children have to face the hardships from the very first days of their lives. But the next generation of slum dwellers still seek for hope.



Around twenty children sit in line studying the ways of Allah in a small crowded room



Sayyid Lalmia, one of the two teachers at the Madrasa is seen in a reflection in the mirror



Sayyid Lalmia scolds the children with a stick



A bookshelf with a handful of religious books



A boy looks outside during the class



A student passes on the religious beads to her teacher



Students look up towards
the photographer
inquisitively during class



A girl holds religious
beads as she
memorises the Quran



A boy recites the Holy
Quran from memory



Nikon D5500

Nikon D5500 is the company's latest addition to its APS-C line-up. A successor to the Nikon D5300, this camera too is aimed at upper entry-level photographers. Nikon's advanced-DSLR features a 24.2 megapixel image sensor, without an optical low-pass filter (OLPF). It has EXPEED 4 image-processing engine, and a wider variety of physical functions, including a TFT vari-angle LCD touch screen, a first in a Nikon DSLR. The camera also features in-built Wi-fi, and can shoot Full HD video (1080/60p). Read on to see how the Nikon D5500 performed as we took it for a ride across town.



LOOK, BODY AND FEEL

To be honest, the camera is almost similar to its predecessor, the Nikon D5300. Besides changes in the physical body of the camera, the D5500 is pretty much an updated D5300. The camera has a 24.2MP sensor similar to its predecessor, but the camera continues the omission of the optical low-pass filter.

The body of the camera is quite compact, but feels quite light in weight too. Just like most Nikon entry-level cameras, this model too features a plastic body, however it feels pretty sturdy. The camera is in fact slightly smaller and lighter than the predecessor. The camera also feels comfortable to hold in hand, and has a deeper hand grip which makes it easier to hold firmly. The four-way controller with an OK button to navigate the menu, adjust auto-focus points etc is retained from the predecessor, and it also features a dial, which can be used to control aperture and shutter speed. The remaining adjustments can be done using the touchscreen LCD.

The D5500 features TFT vari-angle LCD touch screen on the camera, however, unlike the predecessor, this monitor is touchscreen. We found it quite helpful, and besides helping you

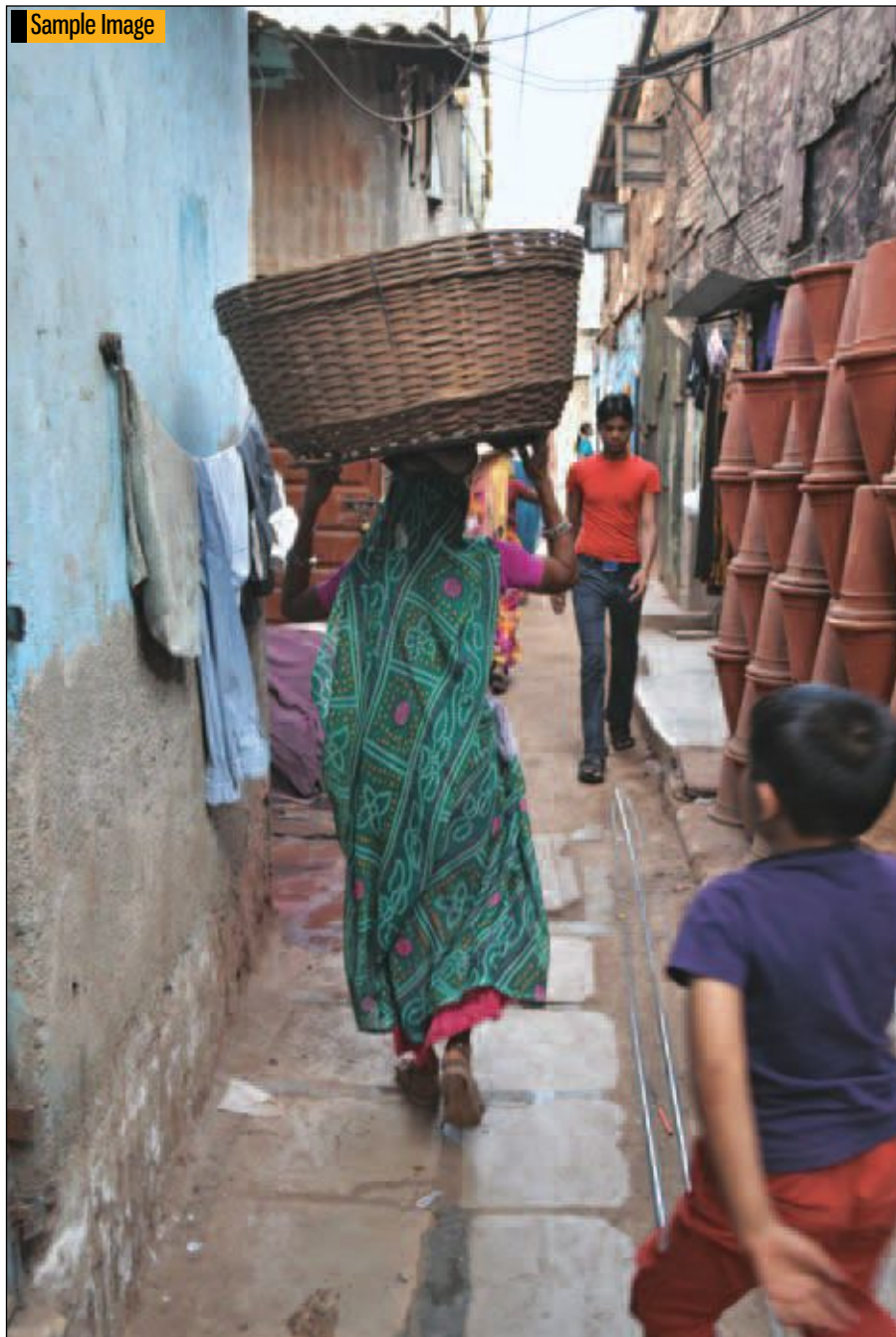
shoot low and high angle shots and video, there is much more the screen can now do. You have access to most functions on the camera using the screen. For aperture and shutter speed



Specifications

Effective pixels:	24.2 million
Image Sensor:	23.5 x 15.6 mm CMOS sensor
Processor:	Expeed 4
ISO:	100–, 25600, in steps of 1/3EV, Auto ISO sensitivity control available
Maximum shutter speed:	1/4000 sec
Number of focus points:	39
Screen:	3.2" TFT vari-angle LCD touch screen
Video:	1920 x 1080; 60p
Battery:	EN-EL14a Rechargeable Li-ion Battery
Size:	Approx. 124, x97, x70mm (4.9, x3.9, x2.8in.)
Weight:	Approx. 470g (1 lb 0.6 oz), with battery and memory card but without body cap; approx. 420 g/14.9 oz (camera body only)

Sample Image



adjustments, besides the dial, you can now touch on the arrow on the screen besides the respective feature, and accordingly increase or decrease half or full stop, moving left or right respectively. By pressing on the 'i' on screen or the physical button you can enter another menu, wherein you can access most functions like ISO, White Balance, Image Quality, Image Size, Picture Control, Focus Mode, Bracketing, Metering, Flash etc. Though this becomes a two step process, it is easier than entering the main menu and then finding each function that you want to adjust. The screen also offers a pinch and zoom feature when reviewing images in Playback mode.

The biggest difference between the camera and its predecessor is the addition of the on-board WiFi, but Nikon has strangely taken away the GPS.

PERFORMANCE

We thought the camera performed quite well, and for an entry-level camera, the image quality was exceptional. From the details in the subject to sharpness, the photographs that we shot certainly showed good quality. Colour reproduction too was pretty good, and the camera retained the natural colours of the subject.

We tested the camera with the Nikkor AF-S 18-55mm VR Lens. When it comes to focussing, the camera was pretty good, and with the 39-focus point system (9-cross type), it was pretty accurate too. However, the lack of an in-body focus motor means you cannot use autofocus with non-AFS lenses.

The video quality of the camera was pretty impressive, and the videos we recorded were at 1080/60p. There was smooth transition from low-light to well-lit and vice-versa. The camera also auto-focuses pretty accurately in the video mode and you can have it to focus on any point on the scene, by simply tapping there on screen.

ISO PERFORMANCE

We tested the ISO performance of the camera, and the result did not disappoint. We started at ISO 100, and until ISO 1600 there was no noise. At ISO 3200, there was some visible noise

ISO Performance



ISO 100 (100% Crop)



ISO 800 (100% Crop)



ISO 1600 (100% Crop)



ISO 3200 (100% Crop)



ISO 6400 (100% Crop)



ISO 12800 (100% Crop)

Sample Image



starting to appear. At ISO 6400, at 100% zoom we started to see some more noise compared to ISO 3200. In the image shot at ISO 12800 we could see visible noise without zooming in, and a slight drop in the quality of the image. At ISO 25600 we could see that the image was quite grainy all over. We thought the camera fared pretty good in the ISO test.

CONCLUSION

We tested the Nikon D5500 and we thought the camera delivered good quality images, with good details and vibrant colours too. The camera's ISO performance was also pretty good, and though it showed grains at higher ISO, the images still were pretty usable, as the image quality was not greatly affected. The touchscreen LCD is a great addition to the camera, and makes choosing any function a little easier and quicker. The camera is priced at ₹54,450 (body only), and for users who already own the Nikon 5300 or a similar entry-level camera, it might not be worth considering it is worth upgrading. For amateurs who are looking to invest in their first DSLR, the Nikon D5500 is definitely a worthy option, as it will certainly not disappoint a user in terms of image quality.

Look, body and feel rating

⇒ Compact and sturdy build quality. Pretty user-friendly, and the touch-screen LCD is easy to use.



Image Quality

⇒ The image quality is brilliant, and the ISO performance too is good.



Overall rating

⇒ A very good entry-level camera for amateurs to invest in.



TEXT AND IMAGES: ABHISHEK DESAI



Sony A7 II

The new Sony Alpha A7 II is a follow up to the original Alpha 7. What makes this different from the previous version is the 5-axis sensor-shift image stabilisation to its 24MP full-frame CMOS sensor. The A7 II dramatically expands your range of expression by compensating for five types of camera shake during handheld shooting of still images and movies. The highly effective 4.5-step compensation lets you confidently zoom in faraway subjects, snap detailed close-ups, capture night scenes and more – all with minimal camera shake blur. The A7 II continues to use a Hybrid AF system and it is 30% faster and 1.5X better than tracking compared to its predecessor. From a design standpoint, additional improvements in this model include more rugged build quality, a new front dial, and a relocated shutter release button.

Sample Image



LOOK BODY AND FEEL

Updated grip design, including moving the front sub-control dial into a more natural and convenient front-facing location, as well as moving the shutter release button out on top of the grip area. This move has given Sony the space to add an additional 'C2' custom function button up to the top deck. The custom function buttons can be customised into 56 different kinds of functions to pick and choose from. In fact, the functionality of the A7 II can be tweaked quite a bit to suit your shooting style, with the C1-3 custom function buttons, as well as the AEL, ISO, AF/MF, and control dial buttons all being programmable can be assigned with up to 56 different functions.

The body itself has seen change from the clean, smooth semi-gloss black of the predecessor to a smooth custom compact body. The body construction is a full two-part magnesium alloy shell that's dust- and moisture-resistant, including weather seals on buttons and dials. This model of the 7 series is more robust from the previous models. The Sony A7 II's lens mount has also been improved by using magnesium alloy to increase strength and rigidity, which can be especially helpful when using larger, longer, and heavier lenses.

The Sony A7 II's tilting LCD has also been upgraded to a White Magic panel, which has pixels comprised of red, green, blue and white dots to

Sample Image



Specifications

Lens Mount	Sony E (Full Frame)
Image Sensor	Exmor CMOS; 35.8 x 23.9 mm
Effective Pixels	24.3MP
Total Pixels	24.7MP
Still Image File Format	JPEG, RAW
Storage Media	SD/SDHC/SDXC, Memory Stick PRO Duo/PRO-HG Duo/XC-HG Duo
Card Slot	1x memory card slot
Viewfinder Type	XGA OLED Tru-Finder electronic viewfinder
Viewfinder Resolution	2,359,296 dot
Frame Coverage	100%
Magnification	Approx. 0.71x
Shutter Type	Electronic first curtain shutter available
Shutter Speed	30 to 1/8000 sec.
Flash Sync Speed	1/250 sec
Image Stabilization	5-axis in-body image stabilization equivalent to 4.5 stops
Drive Modes	Single shot, Continuous High, Continuous Low
Top Continuous Shooting Rate	Up to 5 fps in continuous high; 2.5 fps in continuous low
Exposure Metering System	Advanced 1200-zone evaluative metering
Metering Method	Multi-metering, center-weighted, spot
Metering Range	-1 - +20 EV
Exposure Modes	Aperture-Priority (A), Manual (M), Programmed auto (P), Shutter-Priority Auto (S)
ISO Sensitivity	ISO 100-25600 (expandable to ISO 50-51200 with multi-shot NR)
Autofocus System	Fast Hybrid AF
Number of Focus Points	Phase detection: 117 / contrast-detection: 25
Autofocus Sensitivity	-1 - +20 EV
Built-In Flash	No; Multi-Interface Shoe to accept optional external flash
Movie Recording	1920 x 1080; 60p, 60i, 24p
File Format	XAVC S, AVCHD Ver. 2.0, MP4 (YCbCr 4:2:2 8-bit, RGB 8-bit)
Video Data Rate	XAVC S: 50 Mbps AVCHD: 28 Mbps (60p, PS), 24 Mbps (60i & 24p, FX), 17 Mbps (60i & 24p, FH) MP4: 12 Mbps (1440 x 1080, 30 fps), 3 Mbps (640 x 480, 30 fps)
Audio Recording	Built-in stereo microphone, optional external stereo microphone
Audio File Format	XAVC S: Linear PCM, 2 channel, AVCHD: Dolby Digital AC3 2 channel, MP4: MPEG-4 AAC-LC 2 channel
Maximum Recording Time	29 min.
Monitor	3.0" 1.228.8k-dot TFT LCD monitor
Tilting Design	107° upward; 41° downward
Interface	HDMI micro (type D), multi/micro USB, Multi-interface Shoe, 3.5mm stereo microphone jack, 3.5mm stereo headphone jack
Wi-Fi	Built-in Wi-Fi connectivity (IEEE 802.11b/g/n, 2.4GHz band); NFC Forum Type 3 Tag
Power Source	NP-FW50 rechargeable lithium-ion battery
Battery Life	With Viewfinder: 270 shots With LCD Screen: 330 shots
Operating Environment	32-104 °F / 0-40 °C
Dimensions	5.0 x 3.8 x 2.4" / 126.9 x 95.7 x 59.7mm
Weight	1.3lb / 599g (with battery and memory card)

boost brightness, resulting in a dot count of 1,228,800 versus 921,600 dots for the prior models with RGB panels. The range of the tilting mechanism has also been improved, allowing the panel to tilt upwards to about 107 degrees, up from 84 degrees on the A7, though downward tilt is slightly more limited to about 41 degrees, versus 45 on the predecessor.

PERFORMANCE

While Sony mostly kept the design and ease of use of the A7 II the same as its predecessor, there are some good upgrades to the camera's performance. The most important update is a faster autofocus system than the previous models, which according to Sony is 30% quicker than before. Autofocus on the first A7 models was sluggish and inconsistent, making them a little difficult to use. Sony says the system provides up to 4.5 stops of compensation, which is comparable to lens-based image stabilisation. Also unchanged from last camera is the A7 II's image and video quality. The 24-megapixel sensor takes

Sample Image





5-axis sensor-shift image stabilisation

exceptional images in good lighting conditions and at lower ISO settings and the depth of field control you get with the full-frame chip can't easily be matched by cameras with smaller sensors. In the output the colours are vibrant and accurate. Sony's metering system is good too, often underexposing images unless we adjusted it manually. But more disappointingly, there is still a lot of watercolour-like smearing and artifacting in images taken at higher ISOs, even when you apply the noise reduction. That isn't much of a problem if you shoot RAW and process later, but if you want a quick JPEG image to send to your smartphone using the A7 II's built-in Wi-Fi, you can't really avoid it. The A7 II can shoot images at very high ISO settings, but whether you actually want to do that remains another matter. The A7 II can record 1080p video at up to

60 frames per second and uses the new XAVC S codec for better compression and video quality.

CONCLUSION

If you're looking to buy a high-end mirror less camera, we would say that the A7 Mark II is a brilliant choice. With the combination of still image quality and stabilisation which makes it an amazing buy than any other. The native E-mount lens system is still limited, but Sony is investing heavily in it, and you can be sure many lenses will roll out in the coming year or two. In the mean time, you can have a blast adapting legacy lenses from Leica to Canon. Sadly, video shooters are still better off with the A7s and optically stabilised lenses. And if you're a current A7 owner, it's a judgment call to upgrade to the A7II.

Look, body and feel rating

⇒ Amazing compact body and perfect ease of use

★★★★★

Performance Rating

⇒ Image stabilisation and colour output is stunning

★★★★★

Overall Rating

⇒ With perfect autofocus and image stabilisation, A7 II becomes a recommended camera.

★★★★★

TEXT AND IMAGES: USHMA DHAMDHERE

PHOTOSCAPE

Send in your entries to photoscape at asianphotographyindia@gmail.com



Picture by: Harsh Kumar
Camera: Nikon D5200
Shutter speed : 1/2500 sec
F- Number: f/8
Focal length : 22mm
ISO : 500





The Pic of the Month in the **PHOTOSCAPE** section will receive a gift from Uniross



Picture by: Pritam
Camera: Nikon D5100
Shutter speed : 1/3200 sec
F- Number: f/2
Focal length : 35mm
ISO : 100



Picture by: Ritwick Dey
Camera: Nikon D200
Shutter speed : 1/90 sec
F- Number: f/5
Focal length : 18mm
ISO : 100



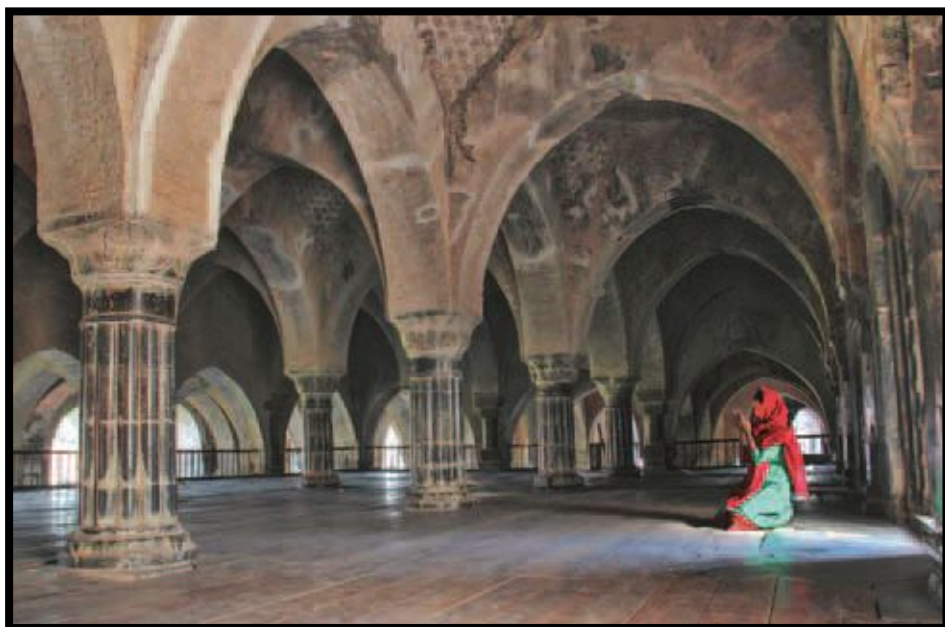
Picture by: Sucheta Das
Camera: Canon EOS 1000D
Shutter speed : 1/1250 sec
F- Number: f/2.8
Focal length : 200mm
ISO : 400



Picture by: Angshuman Paul
Camera: Nikon D5100
Shutter speed : 1/500 sec
F- Number: f/4.8
Focal length : 130mm
ISO : 400



Name: Partha Choudhury
Camera: Nikon D7000
Shutter speed : 1/320 sec
F- Number: f/9
Focal length : 21mm
ISO : 100



Picture by: Sudipta Das
Camera: NA
Shutter speed : NA
F- Number: NA
Focal length : NA
ISO : NA



The Pic of the
Month in the
PHOTOSCAPE
section will receive a
gift from Uniross



Picture by: Amit Vakil
Camera: Canon EOS 550D
Shutter speed : 1/30 sec
F- Number: f/11
Focal length : 11mm
ISO : 100



Picture by: Anish Chakraborty
Camera: Nikon D5100
Shutter speed : 1/640 sec
F- Number: f/1.4
Focal length : 30mm
ISO : 100



Name: Avishek Mazumder
Camera: Nikon D5200
Shutter speed : 1/1000 sec
F- Number: f/6.3
Focal length : 195mm
ISO : 800

PHOTOMONTAGE

Looking to get your portfolio featured??

Send your entry to asianphotographyindia@gmail.com and tell us why we should feature it



This is a story that I photographed recently. Unlike most fathers of children with disabilities, Ramesh Kadam, the father of 14-year old Amol, is the primary caregiver in his family. Ramesh decided to stop working for a living in 2012 and became a stay-at-home father just to take care of his son. Amol was born with severe physical and intellectual disabilities. Since birth, Amol has had visual and speech impairment and very limited mobility. On most nights Amol suffers an epileptic attack. His favourite pastime is in the afternoon when his father turns on the radio for music. Like most children of his age, Amol is also a big fan of cricket. Because he likes sparkles, the Kadam family celebrates Diwali with a sparkler every evening.

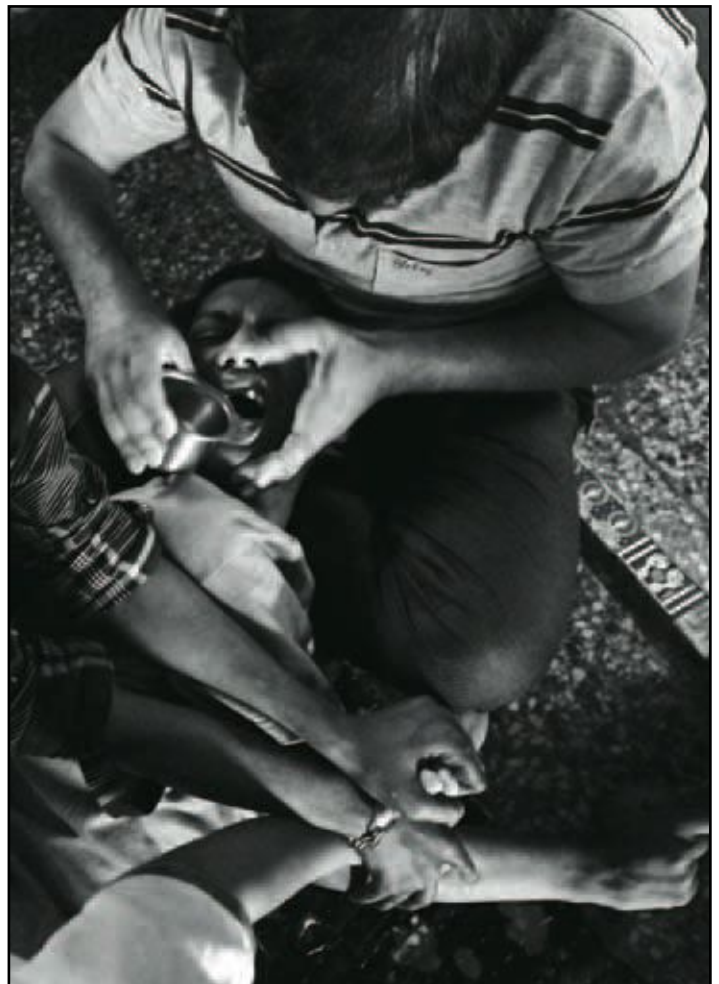
Alan D. Marwein is a self-taught photographer born and brought up in Shillong. He graduated in Visual Communication and also studied documentary photography in Mumbai. He aspires to become a documentary photographer and highlight social issues that plague human beings at this time.

Camera: Canon 500D

Lenses: 10-22mm, 18-55mm and 50mm.



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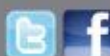


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